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LORD BYRON'S CORRESPONDENCE



Sir Wm. J. Newton, pinxit

JOHN CAM HOBHOUSE

(AFTERWARDS LORD BROUGHTON DE GYFFORD)

From the Miniature in the possession of the late Lady Dorchester

LORD BYRON'S CORRESPONDENCE

CHIEFLY WITH

LADY MELBOURNE, MR. HOBHOUSE,
THE HON. DOUGLAS KINNAIRD, AND
P. B. SHELLEY

WITH PORTRAITS

EDITED BY JOHN MURRAY

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. II

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VOL. II

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BROUGHTON DE GYFFORD. *Frontispiece*

From the miniature in the possession of the late Lady Dorchester.

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From a portrait in the possession of Lord Kinnaird.

LETTERS OF LORD BYRON

CHAPTER VI

EXILE

(1816)

THE two letters at the close of Volume I form the abrupt conclusion of Lord Byron's correspondence with Lady Melbourne.

From that time forward no letters appear to have passed between them, and her name hardly appears again in his correspondence. In a letter to my grandfather, dated 23 April, Byron wrote :

The time is past in which I could feel for the dead—or I should feel for the death of Lady Melbourne,¹ the best and kindest and ablest female I ever knew—old or young. But I have “supped full of horrors,” and events of this kind leave only a kind of numbness worse than pain—like a violent blow on the elbow or on the head. There is one link the less between England and myself.

During the sad and stormy months of the separation and final departure from England, there are no documents in the Hobhouse collection, except those which have already been published in *Recollections of a Long Life*, and as Byron was chiefly in London during that period, and in personal touch with his

¹ She died on the 6th of April. There is one allusion on p. 82 of this volume.

most intimate friends, it is not surprising that his principal correspondence was for a time in abeyance.

On 25 April he set sail for Ostend, accompanied by William Fletcher and Robert Rushton—who had also been his attendants when he sailed from Falmouth in 1809—Berger, a Swiss servant, and John William Polidori, M.D., whom he had engaged as his travelling physician on the recommendation of Sir Henry Halford.¹

The remainder of the correspondence is almost exclusively with Hobhouse, Kinnaird, and Shelley, whose acquaintance Byron made during his residence in Switzerland.

Byron to Hobhouse

OSTEND, April 27th, 1816.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—We got in last night very well, though it blew freshly, and contrary all the way ; but we tacked and tided in about midnight.

All are—and everything is—landed ; and to-night, we design for Ghent. As a veteran I stomached the sea pretty well, till a damned “ Merchant of Bruges ” capsized his breakfast close by me, and made me sick by contagion ; but I soon got well, and we were landed at least ten hours sooner than expected, and our inn (the “ *Cure imperial* ” as Fletcher calls it), furnished us with beds, and a “ flaggon of Rhenish,” which by the blessing of Scrope’s absence—the only blessing his absence could confer—was not indulged in to the extent of the “ light wine ” of our parting potations.

Will you tell Manton that he has put a very bad brush into the pistol case ; and to send me two good new ones by your servant (when you come), for cleaning the locks of my pistols.

You are in town by this time, having dined at Canterbury or Sittingbourne, pitying us “ poor mariners that sail upon the seas.” We are in the agonies of

¹ See *Letters and Journals*, iii. 284.

furnishing Berger with *stivalli* to march *en courier* before us, and the last I saw of Fletcher was with two eggs in his mouth.

The sick Dutchman set off per packet for Bruges this morning. The custom-house was very polite, and all things very fair. I don't know why you vituperated Ostend—it seems a very tolerable town—better than Dover—better than the Spanish and Portuguese ordinary towns, or any of our oriental, at least in the caravansera department.

I shall lay-to for you at Geneva. You have perhaps examined my late Piccadilly premises, and I hope recovered your personals.

My best luck—or rather, his own—to Scrope; all remembrances to Kinnaird, and the rest of us youth, and ever,

Yours most truly, BYRON.

P.S. If you hear anything of my little daughter tell it me—good I hope—as to the rest—as the Irishman said in the Dublin Theatre, when Wellesley Pole was there, “Here's three times three for Lord Wellington, and *silence* for the rest of the family.”

Tell Scrope that Levi *did* us about the ducats, by ninepence each. I will thrash him an I come back. Mind you write; fix a time for coming or, S'death and Pin-Money! I shall be very indignant.

Dr. Dory¹ is a very good sailor, and is doing very well. I hope nothing was left at Dover—the Gods go with us!—

Addio—à rivederlo.

BRUXELLES, May 1st, 1816.

MY DEAR H^E,—You will be surprised that we are not more “*en avant*,” and so am I, but Mr. Baxter's wheel and springs have not done their duty, for which I beg that you will abuse him like a pick-pocket (that is—*He*—the said Baxter being the *pick-*

¹ John W. Polidori, M.D., 1795–1821, accompanied Lord Byron as his physician, but they soon disagreed and parted. *Letters and Journals*, iii. 284

pocket) and say that I expect a deduction, having been obliged to come out of the way to this place, which was not in my route, for repairs, which however I hope to have accomplished, so as to put us in motion in a day or two.

We passed through Ghent, Antwerp, and Mechlin, and thence diverged here, having seen all the sights, pictures, docks, basins, and having climbed up steeples, &c., &c., and so forth. The first thing, after the flatness and fertility of the country, which struck me, was the beauty of the towns, Bruges first, where, you may tell Douglas Kinnaird, on entering at sunset, I overtook a crew of beggarly looking gentlemen, not unlike Oxberry, headed by a monarch with a staff, the very fac-simile of King Clause in the said D. K.'s revived drama.

We lost our way in the dark, or rather twilight, not far from Ghent, by the stupidity of the postilion (*one* only, by the way, to four horses), which produced an alarm of intended robbery amongst the uninitiated, whom I could not convince that four or five well-armed people were not immediately to be plundered and anatomized by a single person, fortified with a horsewhip to be sure, but, nevertheless, a little encumbered with large jack boots, and a tight jacket that did not fit him.

The way was found again without loss of life or limb. I thought the learned Fletcher at least would have known better after our Turkish expeditions, and defiles and banditti, and guards, &c., &c., than to have been so valorously alert, without at least a better pretext for his superfluous courage.

I don't mean to say that they were frightened, but were vastly suspicious, without any cause.

At Ghent we stared at pictures ; and climbed up a steeple, 450 steps in altitude, from which I had a good view and notion of these "paese bassi."

Next day we broke down, by a damned wheel (on which Baxter should be broken) pertinaciously refusing its stipulated rotation. This becalmed us at Lo-Kristy (2 leagues from Ghent) and obliged us to

return for repairs ; at Lo-Kristy I came to anchor in the house of a Flemish blacksmith (who was ill of a fever for which Dr. Dori physicked him—I daresay he is dead by now), and saw somewhat of Lo-Kristy ; Low-country low-life, which regaled me much ; besides, it being a Sunday, all the world were on their way to mass, and I had the pleasure of seeing a number of very ordinary women in extraordinary garments :—we found the “Contadini,” however, very good-natured and obliging, though not at all useful.

At Antwerp we pictured—churched—and steepled again, but the principal street and *bason* pleased me most—poor dear Buonaparte !!! and the foundries, &c., &c. As for Rubens, I was glad to see his tomb on account of that ridiculous description (in Smollett's P. Pickle) of Pallet's absurdity at his monument—but as for his works, and his superb “tableaux,” he seems to me (who by the way know nothing of the matter) the most glaring—flaring—staring—harlotry impostor that ever passed a trick upon the senses of mankind,—it is not nature—it is not art—with the exception of some linen (which hangs over the cross in one of his pictures) which, to do it justice, looked like a very handsome table-cloth—I never saw such an assemblage of florid nightmares as his canvas contains ; his portraits seem clothed in pulpit cushions.

On the way to Mechlin, a wheel, and a *spring* too gave way ; that is, the one went, and the other would not go ; so we came off here to get into dock. I hope we shall sail shortly. On to Geneva.

Will you have the goodness to get at my account with Hoares ? I believe there must be a balance in my favour, as I did not draw a great deal previously to going :—whatever there may be, over the two thousand five hundred, they can send by you, to me in a further credit, when you come out.

I wish you to enquire (for fear any tricks might be played with my drafts)—*my* banker's books, left with you, will shew you exactly what I have drawn ; and

you can let them have the book, to make out the remainder of the account.

All I have to urge to Hanson, or to our friend Douglas K., is to *sell* if possible.

All kind things to Scrope and the rest.

Ever yrs. most truly and obligedly, B.

P.S. If you hear of my child let me know any good of her health and well-doing.

CARLSRUHE, May 16th, 1816.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—We are thus far by the Rhenish route on our way to Switzerland, where I shall wait to hear of your intentions as to junction, before I go to Italy.

We were obliged to diverge from Anvers and Mechlin to Brussels, for some wheel repairs, and in course seized the opportunity to visit Mont St Jean, &c., where I had a gallop over the field on a Cossac horse (left by some of the Don gentlemen at Brussels), and after a tolerably minute investigation returned by Soignies, having purchased a quantity of helmets, sabres, &c., all of which are consigned to Mr. Gordon¹ at Brussels (an old acquaintance) who was desired to forward them to Mr. Murray, in whose keeping I hope to find them safe, some day or other.

Our route by the Rhine has been beautiful, and much surpassing my expectation ; though much answering in its outlines to my previous conception.

The plain at Waterloo is a fine one—but not much after Marathon and Troy, Cheronæa and Platæa.

Perhaps there is something of prejudice in this, but I detest the cause, &c., the victors and the victory, including Blucher and the Bourbons.

From Bonn to Coblenz, and Coblenz again to Bingen and Mayence, nothing can exceed the prospects at every point ; not even any of our old scenes ; though this is in a different style. What it most reminded me

¹ Pryce Lockhart Gordon, author of *Personal Memoirs*, lived at Brussels. He knew Byron when he was a child.

of were parts of Cintra, and the valley which leads from Delimachi—by Libochabo and Argyrocastro (on the opposite mountains) to Tepalini—the last resemblance struck even the learned Fletcher, who seems to thrive upon his present expedition ; and is full of comparisons and preferences of the present to the last, particularly in the articles of provision and caravanseras.

Poor Polidori is devilish ill—I do not know with what, nor does he—but he seems to have a slight constitution, and is seriously laid up ; if he does not get well soon, he will be totally unfit for travelling ; his complaints are headaches and feverishness :—all the rest are well for the present, nor has he had any patients except a Belgian blacksmith (at Lo-Kristy, a village where our wheels stuck) and himself.

We have seen all the sights, churches, and so forth, and at Coblenz crossed the Rhine, and scrambled up the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein—now a ruin. We also saw the road to the sepulchres, and monuments of Generals Marceau and Hoche, and went up to examine them. They are simple and striking, but now much neglected, not to say defaced by the change of times, and this cursed after-crop of rectilignes and legitimacy.

At Mannheim we crossed the river, and keep on this side to avoid the French segment of territory at Strasburg, as we have not French passports, and no desire to view a degraded country and oppressed people.

This town (a very pretty one) is the seat of the Court of the Grand Duke of Baden :—to-morrow I mean to proceed (if Polidori is well enough) on our journey.

At Geneva I expect to hear from you. Tell me of Scrope and his intentions, and of all or any things or persons, saving and except one subject, which I particularly beg never to have mentioned again, unless as far as regards my *child* and *my child only*.

If Scrope comes out, tell him there are some “ light wines,” which will bring to his recollection “ the day of Pentecost ” and other branches of his vinous thirty-nine articles.

I have solaced myself moderately with such “ flaggons

of Rhenish " as have fallen in my way ; but without our Yorick they are nothing.

I hope your book of letters is not slack in sale, and I can't see why Ridgway should not pay " a few *paounds*" for the 2nd Edition, unless it be that I did not pay him his bill, and that he thinks therefore *you* should.

I trust that you will give *Spooney* [Hanson] a jog, as to selling and so forth ; and tell my Potestas [Kinnaird] to come the committee over him. I suppose poor K. will be devilishly bothered with his Drury Lane speech this year—how does Maturin's play go on—or rather go off—of course the prologue has fallen to your lot, and the Comedy—eh ?

I hope you executed the thousand petty commissions I saddled you withal. Pray remember me to all the remembering, and not less to the superb Murray, who is now enjoying inglorious ease at his green table, and wishing for somebody to keep him in hot water.

Wishing you all prosperity, I am ever

Yrs. most truly, BYRON.

SÉCHERON [*near GENEVA*], May 26th, 1816.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—*No* letter from *you*—is this miscarriage by the way ? or are you coming ? Never mind which, as there is no remedy ; but I shall wait here till I hear from you : all the other epistles I expected have arrived.

There is an epistle from Hoares, who tell me they have given in an account to you of my banking concerns.

I hope you saw, or will see (as I believe I locked up my draft-book in my desk, and you cannot get to it) the *drafts* at Hoares', which I drew immediately previous to my departure, as the holders might possibly take advantage of my absence to alter or play tricks with them—they being servants or tradesmen, and not much used to resist temptation. I put this as a possibility, which it is best to ascertain and avoid, and you and I know enough of human nature, and so forth, not to trust to anything but one's optics, and to *these only* in very *clear* weather.

Hoares will show you them, as they always keep them in case of accidents, and it would be a satisfaction to me to know you had looked over them, as I could not do so myself.

Perhaps you have written to me by way of France, and *there* letters are rather more carefully investigated than delivered.

I wrote to you three times from Flanders, once from Bonn,¹ and once from Carlsruhe.

The Rhine from Bonn to Mayence is the perfection of *mixed* beauty ; from Basle to Geneva we were five days, arriving here last night.

Nothing has disappointed me, on my way or out of it—except not hearing from you—but I trust to see you, and the “fore fender” Scrope according to compact, and do not like to begin my Alpine scrambles without you.

We went over the site of Aventicum, where there is some beautiful Mosaic of some extent and preservation, a few inscriptions, a column or two *down*, several scattered shafts, and one solitary pillar in the midst of a field, the last of its family, besides extensive traces of wall and amphitheatre.

From Morat I brought away the leg and wing of a Burgundian : the descendants of the vanquished when last here, in the service of France, buried or carried away the greater part of the heap, except what the Swiss had made into *knife handles*, but there are still a few left ; and with some of these relics I made free, though for a less sordid purpose.

I do not like boring you with descriptions of what I hope you will see, and shall only say that all my expectations have been gratified, and there are things not inferior to what we have seen elsewhere, and one or two superior, such as Mont Blanc and the Rhine.

Polidori has been ill, but is much better ; a little experience will make him a very good traveller, if his health can stand it.

In the hope of seeing you soon I shall scribble no

¹ Not among these letters.—J. M.

further. I believe the best way is to write frequently and briefly ; both on account of *weight*, and the chance of letters reaching their destination ; you must excuse repetitions (as uncertainty induces them) and amongst others the *repetition* of my being

Very sincerely and ever yours, BYRON.

P.S. I have written to Mrs. Leigh, but pray let her know when you hear, as she will be glad of it.

GENEVA, May 27th, 1816.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I have written to you several times, and merely wish to say that I have not had a line since we parted from you, in return : but that I shall stay here some time in the expectation of seeing, or hearing from you.

I have had an agreeable journey, and no disappointments in point of scenery, &c. Mrs. Rawdon¹ is here, whom I mean to request to take this part of the way for me, as I doubt the French posts are very negligent—or even interruptive of English letters—even those not of a political aspect, which Heaven knows mine are not disposed to be.

I see by the French papers that Maturin's tragedy has been successful.² I am truly glad of it, as everyone must be who desires to see merit rise in “these costermonger days.”

I have written to you so frequently and fully, that I will not tire you with any further repetitions than that of my being ever very truly yours affectionately,

B.

EVIAN, June 23rd, 1816.

MY DEAR H.,—Despite of this date, address as usual to the Genevese Poste, which awaits your answers as I await your arrival, with that of Scrope,

¹ Cf. page 51.

² Charles Robert Maturin (1782–1824). He was both novelist and dramatist. His tragedy *Bertram*, which Kemble had refused, was produced by Kean, with great success, in 1816.

whose pocket appears (by your late letter of revolutions at the Union) to have become as "light" as his "wines," though I suppose, on the whole, he is still worth at least £50,000: being what is called here a "millionaire"—that is in francs, and such Lilliputian coinage.

I have taken a very pretty little villa in a vineyard, with the Alps behind, and Mount Jura and the lake before—it is called Diodati, from the name of the proprietor, who is a descendant of the critical and illustrissimi Diodati's, and has an agreeable house, which he lets at a reasonable rate per season or annum, as suits the lessee. When you come out don't go to an inn, not even to Secheron; but come on to headquarters, where I have rooms ready for you and Scrope, and all "appliances and means to boot."

Bring with you also for me—some bottles of *Calcined Magnesia*, a new *Sword-cane*, procured by Jackson—he alone knows the sort (my last tumbled into this lake)—some of Waite's *red* tooth-powder and tooth-brushes—a Taylor's *Pawr-sanias*—and I forget the other things.

Tell Murray I have a 3rd Canto of Childe Harold finished, it is the longest of the three, being one hundred and eleven stanzas.¹ I shall send it by the first plausible conveyance.

At the present writing I am on my way on a water-tour round the Lake Leman, and am thus far proceeded in a pretty open boat which I bought and navigate—it is an English one, and was brought lately from Bordeaux.² I am on shore for the night, and have just had a row with the Syndic of this town, who wanted my passports, which I left at Diodati, not thinking they could be wanted, except in grande route—but it seems this is Savoy, and the dominion of his Cagliari Majesty whom we saw at his own Opera in his own city, in 1809; however, by dint of references to Geneva, and

¹ The third Canto expanded to 118 stanzas.

² This tour is fully described by Shelley, *History of a Six Weeks' Tour*, published by Hookham, 1817.

other corroborations—together with being in a very ill-humour—truth has prevailed, wonderful to relate, and they actually take one's word for a fact, although it is credible and indubitable.

To-morrow we go to Meillerei, and Clarens, and Vevey, with Rousseau in hand, to see his scenery, according to his delineation in his *Héloïse*, now before me ; the views have hitherto been very fine, but, I should conceive, less so than those of the remainder of the lake.

All your letters (that is *two*) have arrived—thanks, and greetings :—What—and who—and the devil is “Glenarvon ?”¹ I know nothing—nor ever heard of such a person ; and what do you mean by a brother in India ? You have none in India ; it is Scrope who has a brother in India—my remembrances to Kinnaird—and Mrs. Kinnaird—to all and everybody, and Hunt in particular, and Scrope, and Mr. Murray, and believe me

Yours ever most truly, B.

P.S. I left the Doctor at Diodati ; he sprained his ankle.

P.S. Will you also particularly remember to bring me a largish bottle of the strongest *Pot Ash* as before—*Mr. Le Shan* will furnish it—that child and childish Dr. Pollydolly contrived to find it broken, or to break it at Carlsruhe—so that I am in a fuss—the Genevese make it badly—it effervesces in the sulphuric acid, and it ought not—bring me some of a more quiescent character.

Early in May 1816 Shelley, accompanied by Mary Godwin and Clare Clairmont, started for Paris *en route* to Geneva, where they arrived on the 15th of that month. They took up their quarters at Dejean's Hôtel de l'Angleterre at Sécheron, on the northern side of the

¹ Lady Caroline Lamb's novel published 9 May, 1816. The hero was meant for Byron ; Lady Holland figures as the Princess of Madagascar.

lake. On the 25 May Byron arrived at that hotel, and, for the first time, made the acquaintance of the Shelleys. An intimacy sprang up between Byron and Shelley, and when, at the end of May, Shelley and his companions moved to the Chapuis cottage, on the opposite side of the lake, Byron prepared to follow them, and eventually established himself at the Villa Diodati, situated a little higher up the lake side. June, and a great part of July, were passed by the two poets in the closest intimacy ; and it was during this time that Byron and Shelley made a tour of the lake in a small sailing boat, said to have been the only boat on Lac Leman that had been built with a keel. A full account of this expedition is given by Shelley in his *Six Weeks' Tour*. While detained for two days, by stress of weather, at the Hôtel de l'Ancre at Ouchy, Byron wrote his "Prisoner of Chillon." They left Ouchy on June 30, and, after two days of pleasant sailing, they arrived at Montalègre. On 20 July Shelley, Mary Godwin, and Clare Clairmont left Geneva, and proceeded by slow stages to Chamounix, where they arrived on the day that the following letter was written.¹

Byron to Kinnaird

DIODATI, NR. GENEVA, July 22nd, 1816.

DEAR KINNAIRD,—A few days ago I answered your letter, and sent in a separate cover the lines you requested, which, whether they answer the purpose or not, will at least prove my attention to your request, and my respect for the memory of Sheridan.²

¹ The story of Clare Clairmont's advances to Byron is given in full in *Letters and Journals*, iii. Appendix VII. 427-32. See also iii. 347-8.

² *Monody on the Death of Sheridan*. Spoken at Drury Lane Theatre. Sheridan died on 7 July, 1816.

Perhaps the author's name had better be made secret; at least I should prefer this for the present.

I now send you a duplicate—a corrected and correct one—of the same to “make assurance doubly sure,” in case the former letter and copy should not arrive. I fear the postage will be heavy—as the letters are so, but that you must excuse—part I have paid, and would willingly pay the rest (as I am out of the country of franking for you), but I can only pay to a certain distance.

Yours ever most truly, B.

P. B. Shelley to Byron

CHAMOUNI, HÔTEL DE VILLE DE LONDRES, July 22, 1816.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—We have this moment arrived at Chamouni—the evening of the day after our departure. An opportunity chances to offer itself of sending a letter. I shall not attempt to describe to you the scenes through which we have passed. I hope soon to see in poetry the feelings with which they will inspire you. The Valley of the Arve (strictly speaking it extends to that of Chamouni) gradually increases in magnificence and beauty, until, at a place called Servoz, where Mont Blanc and its connected mountains limit one side of the valley, it exceeds and renders insignificant all that I had before seen, or imagined. It is not alone that these mountains are immense in size, that their forests are of so immeasurable an extent; there is grandeur in the very shapes and colours which could not fail to impress, even on a smaller scale. I write in the hope—may I say so?—that we possibly shall see you here before our return. No sooner had we entered this magnificent valley than we decided to remain several days. An avalanche fell as we entered it. We heard the thunder of its fall, and in a few minutes more the smoke of its path was visible, and a torrent which it had forced from its bed overflowed the ravine which enclosed it. I wish the wonders and graces of these “palaces of Nature” would induce you to visit

them whilst we, who so much value your society, remain yet near them.

How is our little William ?¹ Is he well ?

Clare sends her love to you, and Mary desires to be kindly remembered.

Yours faithfully, P. B. SHELLEY.

P.S. The roads are excellent, and every facility is accumulated for the traveller. You can go as far as Sallanches in a carriage, after which, although it is possible to accomplish the rest of the journey in a *char du pays*, I would advise you, as we have done, to hire mules. A guide is not absolutely necessary, although we took one ; for the road, with one insignificant exception, is perfectly plain and good. There is apparently a very trifling ascent from Geneva to Chamouni.

On 29 Aug. 1816, Shelley, Mary Godwin, and Clare Clairmont left Geneva for England.

PORTRSMOUTH, September 8, 1816.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—Nine days of tedious voyaging over land and sea have brought us hither. We had some pleasant moments in our journey through France, visitings of sunshine in stormy weather. We passed, not through Paris, but by a shorter route through Versailles, and Fontainebleau, and stayed to visit those famous Palaces, which, as I will hereafter tell you, are well worth visiting as monuments of human power ; grand, yet somewhat faded ; the latter is the scene of some of the most interesting events of what may be called the master theme of the epoch in which we live—the French Revolution. Our passage from Havre hither was wretched—26 hours. We have just dined after our arrival, and I learn that the post departs in a few minutes—but I am anxious to give you the earliest intelligence of the safe arrival of the Childe.²

¹ Shelley's son by Mary Godwin. Died 7 June 1819, at Rome.

² *Childe Harold*, Canto III.

His only adventure since he quitted the paternal roof has been inglorious. He was taken for a smuggler, and turned over and over by a greasy Custom-house officer, to see if lace, &c., were hidden within. He is now quite safe, and locked in my portmanteau.

You shall hear from me again in three days. Adieu—take care of your health—tranquillise yourself—and be persuaded with Coleridge that “Hope is a most awful duty, the nurse of all other virtues.” I assure you that it will not depart, if it be not rudely banished, from such a one as you.

Mary unites with me in sincerest wishes for your happiness ; Clare is about to enjoin me some messages which are better conceived than expressed.

Your sincere friend, P. B. SHELLEY.

Make my remembrances to Hobhouse—as also to Mr. Davies.¹ I hope that the former has destroyed whatever scruples you might have felt, in dismissing Polidori. The anecdote which he recounted to me the evening before I left Geneva made my blood run cold.

LONDON, 26, MARCHMONT STREET, *September 11, 1816.*

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—I have just seen Murray and delivered the poem to him. He was exceedingly polite to me ; and expressed the greatest eagerness to see the Poem. He had already heard that it was considered to surpass all your other productions, and that this was Madame de Staël’s opinion. I shall call on Mr. Kinnaird to-morrow. Murray tells me that Lady Byron is in London, and that her health has materially improved. Her very change of residence confirms this statement.

Mary and Clare left me at Portsmouth, for Bath. I arrive here—at my antient lodgings ; dreadfully vacant and lonely. No companions but the ghosts of old remembrances, all of whom contrive to make some reproach to which there is no reply. My lawyer is, I

¹ Scrope Beardmore Davies.

find, at Lancaster. I have written to him to return hither; but his delay will add to the time that I must inevitably waste in this peopled desert. Fanny Godwin came last night and talked to me of her father's affairs, to which there is fortunately now assistance near. She told me that he had made great progress in his novel.¹ She told me, too, that Northcote the painter, who is an ardent admirer of all your compositions, had recommended Godwin to read "Glenarvon," affirming that many parts of it exhibited extraordinary talent.

The harvest is not yet cut. There are, however, as yet no very glaring symptoms of disaffection, though the distress is said to be severe. But winter is the season when the burthen will be felt. Most earnestly do I hope that despair will not drive the people to premature and useless struggles.

I shall write to you again soon—at this moment I am suffering under a spasmodic headache that does not allow me to connect two ideas. Let me hear from you, and let me hear good news of you. The deep interest that I feel in everything that concerns you leads me to expect with eagerness the most minute details.

My dear Lord Byron,

Your sincere friend, P. B. SHELLEY.

BATH, September 29, 1816.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—You have heard from Kinnaird the arrangement which has been made about "Childe Harold." You are to receive 2,000 guineas. There was no objection made on Murray's, though there was a trifling mistake arising from his believing that he could get it for 1,200, which was no sooner made than obviated. I hope soon to inform you that I have received the first proof. I saw Kinnaird, and had a long conversation with him. He informed me that Lady Byron was now in perfect health—that she was living with your sister. I felt great pleasure from this intelli-

¹ *Mandeville*, published in 1817.

gence. I consider the latter part of it as affording a decisive contradiction to the only important calumny that ever was advanced against you. On this ground at least it will become the world hereafter to be silent. Kinnaird spoke of some reports which he says Caroline Lamb industriously propagates against you. I cannot look on these calumnies in the serious light which others do. They appear to be innocent from their very extravagance, if they were not still more so from their silliness. They are the sparks of a straw fire, that vanish when their fuel fails. You are destined, believe me, to assume a rank in the estimation of mankind where such puerile hostilities cannot reach. There wants nothing but that you should clearly feel, and not disdain to pursue this destination, to deliver you at once from all these inquietudes which the opinion of the fickle multitude delights to inflict upon too sensitive minds. You are now in Italy—you have, perhaps, forgotten all that my unwelcome anxiety reminds you of. You contemplate objects that elevate, inspire, tranquillise. You communicate the feelings, which arise out of that contemplation, to mankind ; perhaps to the men of distant ages. Is there nothing in the hope of being the parent of greatness, and of goodness, which is destined, perhaps, to expand indefinitely ? Is there nothing in making yourself a fountain from which the thoughts of other men shall draw strength and beauty, to excite the ambition of a mind that can despise all other ambition ? You have already given evidence of very uncommon powers. Having produced thus much, with effort, as you are aware, very disproportionate to the result ; what are you not further capable of effecting ? What would the human race have been if Homer, or Shakespeare, had never written ? or if any false modesty, or mistake of their own powers, had withheld them from consummating those unequalled achievements of mind by which we are so deeply benefited ? I do not compare you with these. I do not know how great an intellectual compass you are destined to fill. I only know that your powers are

astonishingly great, and that they ought to be exerted to their full extent.

It is not that I should counsel you to aspire to fame. The motive to your labours ought to be more pure, and simple. You ought to desire no more than to express your own thoughts ; to address yourself to the sympathy of those who might think with you. Fame will follow those whom it is unworthy to lead. I would not that you should immediately apply yourself to the composition of an Epic Poem ; or to whatever other work you should collect all your being to consummate. I would not that the natural train of your progress should be interrupted ; or any step of it anticipated. I delight in much of what you have already done. I hope for much more, in the same careless spirit of ardent sentiment. I hope for no more than that you should, from some moment when the clearness of your own mind makes evident to you the "truth of things," feel that you are chosen out from all other men to some greater enterprise of thought ; and that all your studies should, from that moment, tend towards that enterprise alone : that your affections, that all worldly hopes this world may have left you, should link themselves to this design. *What* it should be, I am not qualified to say. In a more presumptuous mood, I recommended the Revolution of France as a theme involving pictures of all that is best qualified to interest and to instruct mankind. But it is inconsistent with the spirit in which you ought to devote yourself to so great a destiny, that you should make use of any understanding but your own—much less mine.

Shall we see you in the spring ? How do your affairs go on ? May I hear from you respecting these ? Though anxious to know how your estates go on, I have not called on Hanson, overcome by my fear of the awkwardness of such a visit. We are now all at Bath, well and content. Clare is writing to you at this instant. Mary is reading over the fire ; our cat and kitten are sleeping under the sofa ; and little Willy is

just gone to sleep. We are looking out for a house in some lone place ; and one chief pleasure which we shall expect then, will be a visit from you. You will destroy all our rural arrangements if you fail in this promise. You will do more. You will strike a link out of the chain of life which, esteeming you, and cherishing your society as we do, we cannot easily spare. Adieu.

Your sincere friend,

P. B. SHELLEY.

5, ABBEY CHURCH YARD, BATH, November 20, 1816.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—It gives us pleasure to learn that you have arrived in safety at Milan, and that you have not relinquished your intention of revisiting England in the spring. The newspapers say that you have embarked for Albania. But I will hope that your own information is the most correct. Poor Clare's time approaches, and though she continues as well as women in that situation usually are, I think her spirits begin to fail. She has lost much of the animation, and lightness which perhaps you do not ever remember in her. I shewed her your letter, which I should have withheld had I been aware of the wretched state into which it would have thrown her. I need not say that I do not doubt that you were as little aware of such an effect. But the smallest omission, or the most unpre-meditated word often affects a person in a delicate state of health, or spirits. Any assurances which I could make to her of your correct intentions would be superfluous ; she expresses the most unbounded confidence in you ; and, as is natural, considers every imagined defect of kindness in me, as a breach of faith to you. I need not entreat you to believe that neither Mary nor myself will be deficient in every requisite attention and kindness. If you do not like to write to Clare, send me some kind message to her, which I will, to give suspicion his due, throw into the fire as a sacrifice.

Of course you have received intimations of the tumultuous state of England. The whole fabric of society presents a most threatening aspect. What is

most ominous of an approaching change is the strength which the popular party have suddenly acquired, and the importance which the violence of demagogues has assumed. But the people appear calm, and steady even under situations of great excitement ; and reform may come without revolution. Parliament will meet on the 28th of January ; until which—for the populace have committed no violence—they only meet, resolve and petition—all classes will probably remain in a sullen and moody expectation of what the session will produce. The taxes, it is said, cannot be collected—if so, the national debt cannot be paid—and are not the landed proprietors virtually pledged to the payment ? I earnestly hope that, without such an utter overthrow as should leave us the prey of anarchy, and give us illiterate demagogues for masters, a most radical reform of the institutions of England may result from the approaching contest.

Murray, and another bookseller are skirmishing in the advertisement columns of the *Morning Chronicle*. The latter, a most impudent dog ! affirming publickly that you sold him the copyright of some Poems for 500 guineas. By-the-bye, Murray refused to send me the sheets of your poems to superintend, under the plea of your having written to him committing them exclusively to Mr. Gifford's care. I saw them advertised for publication before I was aware of this ; and in answer to my application to Murray, I received the above excuse. My situation with respect to Murray, claiming a duty to which I was not entitled, had some degree of awkwardness in it. Of course I cannot do, what otherwise I should most scrupulously have done, pay the attention to its correctness, which I doubt not to all practical purposes Mr. G. will do. I am not quite certain that Murray does not bear me some illwill, as the cause of the unexpected difference in his disbursements of £800. “Christabel” has been reviewed, and a most unfavourable judgment pronounced on it, by the *Edinburgh Review*. It suggests also that you were much to blame for praising it. In my opinion the

Edinburgh Review is as well qualified to judge of the merits of a poet, as Homer would have been to write a commentary on the Newtonian System.

Accept our thanks for the curious account you give us of the Improvisators and the curiosities of Milan. We have no new things to tell.

Believe me, my dear Lord Byron,

Your very sincere friend, P. B. SHELLEY.

Byron having been joined by Hobhouse, they left Diodati on 8 Oct. 1816, and after crossing the Simplon on the 10th arrived at Milan on the evening of the 12 Oct. On 3 Nov. the travellers left Milan, and arrived at Venice on 11 Nov. The journey is described in Hobhouse's *Recollections of a Long Life*.

Byron to Kinnaird

VENICE, November 27th, 1816.

MY DEAR KINNAIRD,—Before I left Switzerland, I answered your last letter, and feel a little anxious to know that you have received it, as it was partly on business—that is to say, on the disposition of Murray's proposed payment.

I fear there is little chance of an immediate sale of Newstead, which is to be wished for many reasons.

H[obhouse] and I have been some time in the north of Italy, and reached Venice about a fortnight ago, where I shall remain probably during the winter. It is a place which I like, and which I long anticipated that I should like—besides, I have fallen in love, and with a very pretty woman¹—so much so as to obtain the approbation of the not easily approving H., who is, in general, rather tardy in his applause of the fairer part of the creation.

She is married—so our arrangement was formed according to the incontinent continental system, which

¹ Marianna Segati (*Letters and Journals*, iv. 7).

need not be described to you, an experienced voyager—and gifted withal with a modest self-confidence, which my bashful nature is not endowed with—but nevertheless I have got the woman—I do not very well know how, but we do exceedingly well together. She is not two-and-twenty, with great black eastern eyes, and a variety of subsidiary charms, &c., &c., and amongst her other accomplishments is a mighty and admirable singer—as most of the Italians are—(though not a public one) ; luckily I can speak the language fluently ; and luckily (if I did not), we could employ ourselves a little without talking.

I meant to have given up gallivanting altogether on leaving your country, where I had been tolerably sickened of that and everything else ; but, I know not how it is, my health growing better, and my spirits not worse, the “*besoin d'aimer*” came back upon my heart again, and, after all, there is nothing like it. So much for that matter.

I hear you are in a row with Dibdin and Fanny Kelly, and the devil knows whom—Humph ! ¹

I hear also that at the meeting or in the committee, you said that I was coming back in spring—it is probable—and if you have said so I *will* come, for sundry reasons—to see my daughter—my sister—and my friends—(and not least nor last—*yourself*,) to renew my proxy (if Parliament be dissolved) for the Whigs—to see Mr. Waite,² and Mr. Blake³—and the newest play—and the S[ub]-committee—and to sell Newstead (if I can), but not to reside in England again. It neither suits me, nor I it ; my greatest error was remaining there,—that is to say, my greatest error but one.⁴ My ambition, if ever I had much—is over—or at least limited. If I could but remain as I now am, I should

¹ Douglas Kinnaird was one of the members of the Sub-committee of Management of Drury Lane Theatre. Samuel Whithead was at that time the principal manager. It must have been a comical business, for it led to endless quarrels with authors and actors. Byron was a member until his departure from England.

² Dentist.

³ Barber.

⁴ His marriage.

not merely be happy, but *contented*, which in my mind is the strangest, and most difficult attainment of the two—for any one who will hazard enough may have moments of happiness. I have books—a decent establishment—a fine country—a language which I prefer—most of the amusements and conveniences of life—as much of society as I choose to take—and a handsome woman, who is not a bore—and does not annoy me with looking like a fool, setting up for a sage. Life has little left for my curiosity ; there are few things in it of which I have not had a sight, and a share—it would be silly to quarrel with my luck because it did not last—and even that was partly my own fault. If the present does—I should fall out with the past ; and if I could but manage to arrange my pecuniary concerns in England, so as to pay my debts, and leave me what would be here a very fair income (though nothing remarkable at home), you might consider me as *posthumous*, for I would never willingly dwell in the “tight little Island.”

Pray write to me a line or two, addressed to Venice,
Poste Restante. I hope to remain here the winter—remember me to Maria, and believe me,

Yours ever truly and affectionately, B.

P.S. Colonel Finch, an English acquaintance of H[obhouse]’s and mine, has, I believe, written to you to complain of his banker (who is also mine), and has with our permission mentioned our names to you, as knowing him. I must, however, say that *I* have no complaint whatever against (Mr. Siri), the banker—who has, on the contrary, been remarkably civil and attentive to both H. and myself.

Of Col. Finch’s row with him, I understand nothing but that he had one.

Pray let me hear from you, and tell me what Murray has done, and if you have received my letter from Geneva in answer to your former one.

P.S. If you write pray do not refer to any *persons*

or events except our own theatrical—political—personal—attorneycal—poetical—or diabolical concerns.

You see I give a pretty wide range still—but what I wish to put under Quarantine are (*my*) family events, and all allusion thereto past—present—or to come. It is what I have laid an embargo on, with all my other friends.

It will be better that the *Author* of these lines (if spoken), be *not avowed*—pray make it a secret and keep it so.

VENICE, December 17th, 1816.

MY DEAR KINNAIRD,—I suppose any sale of Newstead or Rochdale is hopeless for the present—but I wish it could be accomplished. I have it so much at heart, to divorce myself, as much as possible, from all connection with the country called England; feeling so much more tranquil, and contented in my present situation—that one of my horrors is the necessity of returning for business.

I wrote to you the other day—I have little to add concerning Venice—or myself—except that I am studying the Armenian language. A few nights ago, I saw at the theatre a translation of Holcroft's "Tale of Mystery"; and a farce, the *same* by the way, of which Dibdin translated one act, and you another. It turns upon a usurper persecuting a father. It did not succeed at D[rury] L[ane]. I think it was better acted here than there.

What were the odds at that time—against my seeing the same farce at Venice?

Hobhouse is gone to Rome, with his brother; but returns to Venice in February.

I remain here—probably till spring. I believe I told you in my last, that I had fallen in love, so that the last month has been one of the pleasantest, and withal the *quietest*, in my recollection.

Let me hear from you.

Ever yours very truly and affectionately, BYRON.

Byron to Hobhouse

VENICE, December 19th, 1816.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Your Bologna missive is arrived. Thanks—your horse then is dead. “Is the sable warrior fled? thy *steed* is gone, he rests among the dead.” And so do—you best know how many *francs* expended in that precious purchase. I presume that your surviving carrion will be promoted into a saddle-horse—unless you harness your Giuseppe in lieu of the defunct, and make him help to draw his injured master.

In return for the information new and various in your letter, I can send you but a poor requital. The varieties of Venice being no longer various to you, and my daily course of life being much the same—studious in the day and dissolute in the evening.

My Armenian lectures still continue. I have about mastered thirty of the thirty-eight cursed scratches of Mesrob, the maker of alphabets, and some words of one syllable. My lessons are in the Psalms—and Father Pasqual is a very attentive preceptor.

By way of requital for his instructions (as I could not offer sordid money to these friars), I have taken upon me the expenses of his Armenian and English grammar, which is now printing. It costs but a thousand francs to print five hundred copies, and being the first published in these joint languages, I think “I do the state some service,” almost as much as Mr. Valpy of Tooke’s Court, who is Polidori’s printer.

Madame Albrizzi I have seen sometimes; she desires her compliments;—the Countess G. through her, or else Contessa Albrizzi of her own accord, has desired me to go again to the *Mansion-house* Conversazione, which I hardly expected after that pretty piece of omission you and I made in the dinner department—I shall go.¹

¹ Hobhouse says, in his journal relating to this period, that he and Byron received a verbal invitation through their *laquais* to dine with the Austrian Governor, and set off to his palace for that purpose. On reaching the steps their hearts failed them—they were afraid of a mistake. “We dined at Pellegrino’s restaurant,

The Fenice (or fire office insurance) theatre opens in a week. I have taken a good box for the Carnival. There is to be a ballet, and balls, and I know not what—if the mumming of the maskers is good, I will tell you all about it. The other evening at the Benedetta, I was regaled with two dramas, one Holcroft's "Tale of Mystery," the other a farce damned last year at Drury Lane, of which Kinnaird and Dibdin translated an act apiece from the French. There was also a row in the theatre as follows :—

A Signor Camboni (I think), who is separated from his wife for mutual felicity, was in one box, and his extracted rib in another. Signor Camboni had become the *Cavaliere servente* of another lady not separated—and the separated lady had provided herself with a substitute for Signor Camboni. But Signor Camboni, upon his seeing moiety, went into choler, and then into the box, reprobating his wife, and *bestemmiarto nobilmente* her Cavaliero. The Cavaliero (who was once an officer in Eugène's army), replied in military phrase ; and, upon receiving a *maledetto scopalotto*, returned it with such interest that much swearing and scuffling ensued ; and both parties rolled skirmishing out into the passage ; but showed no science, all rowly-powly, the vulgarest roundabout hitting you ever saw. "Constables came up for to take them into custody," and the police settled the business. Everybody cried out against Signor Camboni, by which you may judge how morals are in these parts—they said it was a scandal to disturb amatory people at that rate.

My own amours go on very tranquilly. She plagues me less than any woman I ever met with ; and I am indebted to her for the pleasantest month I can reckon this many a day. I know you hate that sort of thing, so I will say no more about love and the like, except

went on to the Opera, and heard from Madame Albrizzi at her box there, that we had been waited for for two hours ! "

Madame Albrizzi was known at Venice as the Madame de Staël of Italy. She was born in 1761, and in 1796 married Count Giuseppi Albrizzi. Her salon was frequented by distinguished *literati*.

that in a letter from Lady J[ersey] I hear that C[aroline] is about to produce a young “it and I.” By the way, what think ye ? A bookseller, a villain, an impostor, in Cheapside, publishes a set of damned things calling them mine. Murray says, and very truly, they are not mine, when what does this fellow ? Why—publishes a counter-advertisement saying that they are mine, and that he paid to me *five hundred guineas* for the copyright !! There’s a story for you “*Beck !*” Does not this beat the annals of the trade, from Currill and Osborne down to Tegg and Johnson, the names of these ragamuffins ?

I never set eyes upon the verses or the vendors of them in my days.

I believe Murray has by this time published the new Canto¹ and Chillon, &c., but I know nothing for certain.

The man of learning is still a prosperous gentleman. Berger² amuses himself with making love to some Harlotry on the other side of the street, out of the hall window. At least, this is the household scandal. Stevens slumbers ; and Matz is learning to obey the word of command with a piece of bread upon his nose until permission is accorded to eat it. He has stolen some more legs of mutton, and I detected him myself in the street the other day investigating a barrel of tripe, whereupon I cuffed him soundly.

I have (to use young A.’s phrase) “done” some more “acquaintance” since you went, but have mostly lived pleasant and sulky. I like Venice and its marine melancholy ; and rather wish to *have seen* Rome, than to *see* it, though to be sure having “done” Constantinople, I must also do t’other place. I commend you to the gods, and am ever,

Very truly and affectionately yours, B.

¹ Canto of *Childe Harold*.

² Berger was Byron’s Swiss servant, who left England with him. Matz was a mastiff.

CHAPTER VII

VENICE

(1817)

THE year 1817 was spent mainly in Venice. In the early summer he made a journey to Ferrara, where he wrote *The Lament of Tasso*, and later he joined Hobhouse in Rome, a visit which inspired the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold*. His manner of life in Venice is too well known to call for further description. He resided in the house of the Segatis and frequented the salons of the Countesses Albrizzi and Benzoni. Hobhouse rejoined him in Venice in October and remained there till January 1818. Byron's principal writings of this year were the completion of the Third Canto of *Childe Harold* and of *Manfred* and the composition of the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold* and *Beppe*.

This chapter contains several interesting letters from Shelley, who from this time forth, except when they were together, carried on a regular correspondence with Byron.

P. B. Shelley to Byron

LONDON, January 17th, 1817.

I write to you, my dear Lord Byron, after a series of the most unexpected and overwhelming sorrows, and from the midst of a situation of peril and persecution. But I have good news to tell you. Clare is safely delivered of a most beautiful girl. Both the mother and the child are well, and Mary describes the latter to be a creature of the most exquisite symmetry, and as

betraying, even at its birth, a vigour and a sensibility very unusual. But you will doubtless learn all, and more than can relate to this subject from Clare's letters.

My late wife¹ is dead. The circumstances which attended this event are of a nature of such awful and appalling horror, that I dare hardly avert to them in thought. The sister of whom you have heard me speak may be truly said (though not in law, yet in fact) to have murdered her for the sake of her father's money. Thus did an event which I believed quite indifferent to me, following in the train of a far severer anguish, communicate a shock to me which I know not how I have survived. The sister has now instituted a Chancery process against me, the intended effect of which is to deprive me of my unfortunate children, now more than ever dear to me; of my inheritance, and to throw me into prison, and expose me in the pillory, on the ground of my being a REVOLUTIONIST, and an *Atheist*. It seems whilst she lived in my house she possessed herself of such papers as go to establish these allegations. The opinion of Counsel is, that she will certainly succeed to a considerable extent, but that I may probably escape entire ruin, in the worldly sense of it. So I am here, dragged before the tribunals of tyranny and superstition, to answer with my children, my property, my liberty, and my fame, for having exposed their frauds, and scorned the insolence of their power. Yet I will not fail; though I have been given to understand that I could purchase victory by recantation. Indeed, I have too much pride in the selection of their victim.

So here is an imperfect account of my misfortunes (yet one thing happened in the autumn that affected me far more deeply).² I should have written to you

¹ Harriet (Westbrook), Shelley's first wife, whom he had left when he formed his attachment to Mary Godwin, drowned herself Nov. 1816.

² The death of Fanny Godwin, who committed suicide believing that she was an incumbrance to her father in his financial embarrassments.

before, if I had been beaten down by any common griefs.

I had, last month, an unexpected letter from your friend, Leigh Hunt, whom I have since visited. He is indeed a most friendly, and excellent man. I have found few such as he appears to be in the world. He was so kind as to listen to the story of persecution which I am now enduring from a libidinous and vindictive woman, and to stand by me as yet by his counsel, and by his personal attentions to me.

I have no other news to tell you, my dear Lord Byron, unless you think this is news : that I often talk, and oftener think, of you ; and that, though I have not seen you for six months, I still feel the burden of my own insignificance and impotence ; as they must ever forbid my interest in your welfare from being put to the proof. Adieu.

Faithfully yours, P. B. SHELLEY.

Hunt requests me to send you his remembrances.

Mary Shelley to Byron

BATH, January 13th, 1817.

DEAR LORD BYRON,—Shelley being in London upon business, I take upon myself the task and pleasure of informing you that Clare was safely delivered of a little girl yesterday morning (Sunday, January 12) at 4. She sends her affectionate love to you ; and begs me to say that she is in excellent spirits, and as good health as can be expected. That is to say, that she has had a very favourable time, and has now no other illness than the weakness incidental to her case.

A letter ought not to be sent so far without a little more news. The people at present are very quiet, waiting anxiously for the meeting of parliament—when, in the month of March, as Cobbett boldly prophesies, a reform will certainly take place.

For private news, if you feel interest in it: Shelley has become intimate with Leigh Hunt and his family. I have seen them, and like Hunt extremely. We have

taken a house in Marlow, to which we intend to remove in about two months ; and where we dare hope to have the pleasure of your society on your return to England. The town of Marlow is about thirty miles from London.

My little boy is very well, and is a very lively child.

It is a long time since Shelley has heard from you, and I am sure nothing would give him greater pleasure than to receive news of your motions and enjoyments.

Another incident has also occurred, which will surprise you, perhaps.¹ It is a little piece of egotism in me to mention it, but it allows me to sign myself, in assuring you of my esteem, and sincere friendship,

MARY W. SHELLEY.

Byron to Kinnaird

VENICE, January 20th, 1817.

MY DEAR KINNAIRD,—Your letter and its contents (viz. the circulars and indication for £500) are safely arrived—thanks.

I have been up all night at the opera, and at the Ridotto and its masquerade, and the devil knows what ; so that my head aches a little—but to business.

My affairs ought to lie in a small compass—if Newstead were sold, they would be settled without difficulty—and if Newstead and Rochdale both were sold—I should think with ease, but till one or both of these are disposed of, they are in a very unpleasant situation. It is for this reason I so much urge a sale—even at almost any price.

With regard to Hanson—I know not how to act, and I know not what to think, except that I think he wishes me well—it is certainly not his fault that Claughton could not fulfil the conditions of sale.

Mr. Riley has reason—but he must really wait till something can be done about the property—if he likes he may proceed against *it*,—but as to the produce of my *brain*—my MS.—my night-mare is my own *personality*, and by the Lord, as I have earned the sum, so will I

¹ Her marriage to Shelley.

expend it upon my own proper pleasures—voyagings and what not—so that I request that you will *not* disburse a ducat save to *me*, the *owner*. You do not say a word about the publication itself—from which I infer that it has failed—if so—you may tell me at once—on Murray's account rather than on mine—for I am not to be perturbed by such matters at this time of day, as the fall of the thermometer of a poetical reputation; but I should be sorry for M[urray], who is a very good fellow.

However, as with one thing or another, he—Murray—must have cleared on the whole account—dating from the commencement—I feel less anxious for him than I otherwise should.

Your quotation from Shakespeare—humph—I believe that it is applied by Othello to his *wife*, who by the way was *innocent*—the Moor made a mistake, and so have you.

My desire that Murray should pay in the agreement will not appear singular, when you recollect that the time has elapsed within a few days, when three-quarters of the whole were to have been disbursed by him.

Since my departure from England, I have not spent (in nine months) within some hundreds of two thousand pounds, so that neither my pleasures nor my perils, when you consider the ground I have gone over, and that I had a physician (now gone, thank heaven), to fee and feed out of it—a very extravagant, silly gentleman he was into the bargain.¹

By the way—I should wish to know if Hanson has been able to collect *any rent* at all (but little it can be in these times) from N[ewstead]. If he has, and there be any balance, it may also come to me in the shape of circulars—the time is also approaching when there will be something due from that magnificent father *at law* of mine—Sir R. N.—from whom I expect punctuality—and am not disposed to remit him any of his

¹ Polidori, who parted from Byron at Diodati.

remaining duties ; let him keep to his time—even in trifles.

So you wish me to come to England—why ? for what ?—my affairs—I wish they could be settled without—I repeat that your country is no country for me. I have neither ambition nor taste for your politics, and there is nothing else among you which may not be had better elsewhere. Besides, Caroline Lamb and Lady B—my Lucy and my “ Polly ”—have destroyed my *moral* existence amongst you ; and I am rather sick of being the theme of their mutual inventions. In ten years I could unteach myself even to your language, and am very sure that—but I have no time or space for further tirade at present.

Ever yours very truly, B.

P.S. Pray write soon. Catalani is to be here on the 20th.

VENICE, February 3rd, 1817.

MY DEAR KINNAIRD,—I have acknowledged your letter of the 3rd January, and its contents duly.

Hobhouse is at Rome, and wants me to join him there. I am undecided (as usual) ; at any rate, I shall outstay the Carnival at Venice.

All I know of your deposition or resignation is from yourself—of England I know nothing, hear nothing (never looking into a paper, foreign or Italian), and desire to hear nothing beyond some good (if it were possible of my own damned concerns), or of my friends. I suppose, and fear that your row plagued you sufficiently ; but what could be expected from the Green Room ? Sooner or later you will have your revenge, and so shall I (in other matters), you on the stage and I off ; and, by Nemesis ! you shall build a new Drury—which shall pay *one* per cent. for the subscribers—and I will write you a tragedy which shall reduce your pounds to shillings ; besides, for my own particular injuries (while this play is representing with much applause), ordaining a proscription to

which that of Sylla shall be a comic opera, and that of Collot d'Herbois at Lyons a symphony.¹ In the meantime, as Candide says, and Cincinnatus might have said, “il faut cultiver notre jardin.” I expect, by the way, that you will write to me a letter now and then, with as much, or as little, as you choose to say. I wish you well in your senatorial début ; but you have not hypocrisy enough for a politician, and as to oratory, (having made so many prior speeches) ; your maiden speech will be a “Spinning-house Maidenhead,” if you recollect that *cant* term of our Alma Mater.

Of Venice I say nothing ; there is little going on but fiddling, masquing, singing, and t'other thing. Catalani is just arrived, to add to the buffooneries of the day. Direct here as before.

Tell me of Scrope²—is he as full of fierce “embraces” as when I last saw him ? He had made then innumerable conquests, according to his own account ; I wish he would marry and beget some Scropes ; it is a pity the dynasty should not be prolonged. I do not know anyone who will leave such a “gap in Nature.”

I hope also that he wins the specie still left among you.

Yours ever and most truly, BYRON.

VENICE, February 24th, 1817.

MY DEAR K^D,—I have in all received from you two letters since my arrival in Venice—the one with the £500 in circulars, and the second enclosed to Mess^{rs} Siri and Wilhalm—announcing the order of your partners to my credit for a similar sum.

I have no wish to press Murray, nor anyone else when I can help it, but I do not like to anticipate and begin drawing upon you, till you have the needful, nor shall I—for I have £1,100 in eleven of Hammersley's notes, still in hand, but this does not prevent me from

¹ Collot D'Herbois (1750–1796) was a member of the Convention, and on the Committee of Public Safety. He was deported to Cayenne, where he died.

² Scrope Davies.

expecting the said John Murray, Esq^{re} “to come up to time,” because then I know the precise extent of my floating funds, and in these hard times this is desirable, for the sake of all parties.

The Carnival is over, on Tuesday last; I am glad of it, for though I am subsided into a moderate dissipation—the last three or four up-all-nights did me no good; and my constitution is a little in arrear. However, Lent will bring me round again, with early hours, and temperance.

Your “one or two letters” announcing “the complete success” of the *poesies*, reached me not, but those with the cash (which is much better) did. As you had not even alluded to the publications, I had begun to think, what was probable enough, that “the learned world said nothing at all to my paradoxes, nothing at all, Sir,” and to console myself, the usual consolation of authors, with posterity—and the discernment of the “happy few.”

I, however, rejoice in the good taste of the age, and will requite it accordingly.

Hobhouse’s epistle to the Quarterly I have not seen, but I suppose it to be a wrathful composition. He will not be pleased to hear that Wedderburn Webster was his precursor in reply to the Quarterly. Murray tells me that W. W. answered in the M^g Chronicle—in a new style of controversy.

I saw in Switzerland in the autumn the poems of Webster, and I suspect that he made more by the prose of the St. James’s Ledger—than he will by his own poetry.

Amongst the ingredients of his volume I was not a little astonished to find an epitaph upon *myself*—the desert of which I would postpone for a few years at least, just to see out the row which is beginning amongst you.

If I can be of any use, I will come over, but it would be as well to have something else to do than “speak and write”; you may tell B^t so with my last remembrances.

I quite agree with you that you are as well out of D[rury] Lane ; but I suppose you have still a penchant. I did not mention Kean, because, to say the truth, I had a little forgotten the green room—but I am glad to hear of his successes. You do not tell me if Scrope has won himself home from last summer, or whether he has yet seen a “Boa Constrictor.”

Of myself I have little to relate out of the routine except that about a month ago there was a battle in my room between two damsels,¹ which ended in the flight of one, and the fits of the other ; after about sixteen slaps, given and received, with one or two which I incurred in the act of separating them—the little one won.

They were sisters-in-law, and all passed so rapidly that I had hardly time to interfere—but there was a deal of *eau-de-Cologne*, and burnt feathers, and all the apparatus of evanition, before things could be placed upon a right footing.

The cause was one finding the other in a place and position which was supposed not to belong to her ; and the assailant had watched her time, and made her appearance when nobody expected, or, indeed, desired it.

Hobhouse is still at Rome. I mean to remain here at least till the spring, unless anything unexpected occurs.

I should like to stay out another year or more, if I could ; but I presume we must all come back, and put our “musty morriions on” (as Beaumont and Fletcher have it) so “now Gregory, remember thy swashing blow.”

Ever yrs. very truly, B.

Byron to Hobhouse

VENICE, March 7th, 1817.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I received both your letters, and answered the first ; the second was from *Rome*, to

¹ *Letters and Journals*, iv. 50–1.

which my indecision has prevented a reply. I thought of joining you, but have procrastinated till it is too late ; as the influx of strangers previous to the Holy Week, and the coming of spring (which is the malaria season, I understand) would render my stay too short for any useful purpose, besides crowding me while I remained.

The Carnival here was gay and foolish enough to be very amusing. Two Englishmen were here, one of whom introduced himself (and friend) as the friend of Capt. G^e Byron ; his name was Capt. Stuart, of the navy—an agreeable person. I helped them to Mad^e Albrizzi's, and went with them to the Ridotto, to the Fenice (where I had a box), and such other mummeries as were diverting, and gave them a letter to Col. Fitz[gerald] of Milan, and a message for Breme.

I am sorry to say that I do not see any chance of a meeting at Rome, which is entirely my own fault, and I regret it extremely ; firstly, because I would rather have seen it with you than any other person ; and secondly, because I must see it if possible before I return to democratize in England.

Dr. Skinas lately sent out a proposition through Mastoxithi and Mad^e Albrizzi to accompany me to Greece, which I have declined because of pestilence there, and undefined quarantine on one's return.

I have lately had news of course from England :—Scrope flourishing by the account—Kinnaird in good health and great hurry as usual—Burdett and politics advancing—Walter Scott's brother (who was Isle of Man-ned for malversation of Ld. Somerville's concerns, or not being able to give an account of his accounts, and is lately gone to Canada) is *positively* (Murray says) the author of “Waverley,” etc., etc. ; he has also published another, “Tales of my Landlord,” which is generally deemed even greatly *superior* to all the former. Murray sent it to me, but I have not received it, and I fear that its arrival is problematical.

Wedderburn Webster, having been quizzed in a former Quarterly, has replied to the editor in a letter to

the learned Perry,¹ which he concludes by leaving *him* (the editor of the Quarterly) "with *feelings* of contempt and *oblivion*."

I am afraid it will not please you that this same evil genius, W. W., should be also a respondent to the critics, as I recollect in Switzerland you gave him and his preface to the devil, for having taken in vain, with his awkward compliments, the name of a friend of yours, not so much for the sake of the friend, as of a projected preface, in which you were pleased to be gracious.

The Patriarch of Venice was installed the other Sunday; the court of Vienna *decreed* in an edict, that he should proceed to St. Mark's in a "Coach and four" (but, as Incledon says in "The Son and Heir of Sir William Meadows") "thaut's impossible"; the Venetians grinned, as you may suppose, at the knowledge of topography displayed in this Cesarean decree, which was truly "German to the matter."

Catalani sang here in three or four Academies given by her at San Benedetto, and carried off a quantity of Lire Venete; her voice seemed to me the same as ever, and her figure and face not much older.

Her "Signor Procolo," Mounseer (I forget the fellow's name) made himself not less ridiculous—by the accounts given of his demeanour—here, than in London, where he was a prodigious mountebank.

I have heard twice from the Dr. Polidori, who has been visiting the sick at Pisa. He has written a tragedy called "The Duke of Athens," and is by this time on his way to England, and from England he means to go to the Brazils with the Danish Consul (whom he found at Pisa) to teach the Portuguese medicine, which they are fond of to distraction.

I saw your correspondent, the Countess Mustani with M^e Albrizzi, etc.; she enquired after you with great politeness, and regretted that she was not at Verona during your transits. She is a fair, full, and

¹ James Perry, editor of *The Morning Chronicle*.

rather handsome personage, of some seven and thirty summers' date.

I have not the least idea where I am going, nor what I am to do, and am,

Yours, ever very truly, BYRON.

VENICE, March 31st, 1817.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—In verity, the *malaria* was a pretext, as I knew it was a summer and not a spring production, but the English crowd of the Holy Week was as sincere an excuse as need be.

Since I wrote to you I have had a fever, like one I had from the marshes of Elis, which nearly finished me at Patras, but this was milder, and of shorter duration ; it, however, left me weakly. It had been approaching by slow degrees ever since the Carnival, and at last came on rather sharply. It was not, however, the low, vulgar typhus, which is at present decimating Venice, and has half unpeopled Milan ; but a sharp, gentlemanly fever that went away in a few days. I saw no physician ; they sent for one without telling me, and when I heard he was below I had him sent out of the house. And so I recovered. It was not Aglietti, I believe, but you may be sure if it had been, that prig should never have had a fee of mine.

At present I am very well, with a monstrous appetite. I think of coming on to Rome this ensuing month ; in case you should be gone, will you delegate some friend to get me in without custom-house research, and will you tell me what hostel or inn I am to lay down my wallet in, and how about lodgement ? Truly wroth am I to hear the rumours you wot of, particularly the first, but one is as false as the other. The origin of the latter I take to be a lie which was rife here about the *Fabre* or *Fabri* (which is it ?), the singer from Milan—the girl we saw there. She sang here, at the Fenice, during the Carnival ; and was in high and magnificent maintenance by a Sig^r Papadopoli, a Venetian of great wealth and concupiscence. But a man in a cloak was seen

coming out of her abode one very early morning, and this man they would have to be me (I never saw her in my life but on the stage), and not content with this, it was added that I had decamped with her for Naples ; and I had as much difficulty in proving my presence here, as Partridge in re-establishing his existence. The origin of these unseemly reports I take to be a translation in some Venetian gazette of the Jena review of C. L.'s *Glenarvon*, and another of the last canto of C. H^d, the one stating the scratching attempt at canicide at Lady Heathcote's, and the other representing me as the most decided panegyrist of Buonaparte. I have, you may be sure, noticed neither one, nor the other of these matters.

The Quarterly I have read (which is written by Walter Scott, so M[urray] says). It and the "Edinburgh" are as favourable as the author could wish ; and more so than could be wished by anybody else. I am very glad that anybody likes the Canto, but particularly glad that Baillie does, because he is a very superior if not a *supreme* man ; as for you and I, we are such old friends that "we have travelled over one another's minds long ago" ; don't you remember what a pet that sentence used to put you into ? But never mind, is it not true ?

In case you should not have heard from England, I will tell you some news of literatoor. K[innaird] writes to me that Mrs. K., under the colours of Keppel, has become "*a PUBLIC character*," at Drury Lane as well as at Covent Garden, with great success. I suppose he means, of course, as a singer, but it is as well to be distinct.

Maturin's¹ second tragedy, he says, has not succeeded, and he gives some very good reasons why it should not, which sound remarkably well, particularly

¹ Charles Robert Maturin (1782-1824). His first play, *Bertram*, was taken up by Kean on the recommendation of Scott and Byron, and produced at Drury Lane in May 1816 with success. Emboldened by this, Kean produced his second play, *Manuel*, in March, but it was a complete failure, as was his third, *Fredolfo*, which was introduced at Covent Garden in the following May.

as his very last letter save this, anticipated its “complete success.”

For my part I say nothing ; but this I will say, Did I ever ? No, I never, etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., etc. Do you understand me ? No one else can.

I have heard of my daughter, who is very fine they say ; but there is a dispute about her suscituated between me and my moral Clytemnestra. Some day or other Ada will become my Orestes, and Electra too, in one.

This dispute will probably end in a lawsuit. Having heard that they thought of voyaging, I refused to allow the child to leave the country, and demanded an explicit declaration that on no account should the attempt be made ; this was evaded, and at last a sort of half reluctant kind of paper signed, which I have refused to accept, and so we are all at, or about, law.

That old fool Noel, last year, I hear for the first time, had filed a bill in Chancery against me, upon some remote question of property, purely to make my daughter a ward of the Court and circumscribe my right over her, or rather my authority. I can tell you, however, that Hanson has behaved very well, and briskly in this business, for I have copies of the correspondence.

They have begun, and, by the Lord, I must go on—pretty separation ! We are as fast as ever, only pulling the chain different ways, till one of us stumbles. My star is sure to win in the long run.

You do not say a word of your “paradoxes,” or of the Pope—only think of Dr. Polidori coming too !—well, I’m sure ! Is he any sager ? I suppose you mean that despicable lisping old ox and charlatan, Frederic North, by the successor to L^d Guilford.¹ Of all the perambulating humbuggerers, that aged nondescript is the principal.

¹ Frederick North succeeded his brother as Earl of Guilford in 1817. He had been Governor of Ceylon from 1798 to 1805. He was born 1766, and died 1827.

I send you a catalogue of some books “of poeshie of the king, my master,” as Freytag said to Voltaire :

- I read the “Christabel.”
Very well.
- I read the “Missionary,”
Somewhat visionary.
- I tried at “Iderim,”
Ahem !
- I read a sheet of “Margaret of Anjou,”
Can you ?
- I skimmed a page of Webster’s “Waterloo,”
Pooh ! Pooh !
- I looked at Wordsworth’s milkwhite “Rylstone Doe,”
Hello !!
- I read “Glenarvon,” too, by Caro. Lamb,
God damn.

I have bought several books which must be left for my bankers to forward to England ; amongst others a complete Voltaire, in ninety-two volumes, whom I have been reading ; he is delightful, but dreadfully inaccurate frequently.

Yours ever, and very truly and affectly., B.

Byron to Kinnaird

VENICE, March 31st, 1817.

MY DEAR KINNAIRD,—Your letter of the 14th is before me. I have no poem nor thought of a poem called the “*Gondola*,” nor any similar subject. I have written nothing but a sort of metaphysical poem,¹ which was sent to M[urray] the other day—not for publication, but to show Mr. Gifford. Tell him to show it to you. I would not have it published unless G[ifford] thought it good for anything ; for myself I have really, and truly, no notion what it is good for.

I have nothing else, except a translation from a Spanish and Moorish ballad, and an Italian translation or two. As to tragedy, I may try one day, but *never* for the *stage*. Don’t you see, I have no luck there ? My two addresses were not liked, and my committee-ship did but get me into scrapes ; no—no, I shall not

¹ *Manfred.*

tempt the Fates that way—besides, I should risk more than I could gain. I have no right to encroach on other men's ground, even if I could maintain my own.

You tell me that Maturin's second tragedy has failed ; is not this an additional warning to everybody as well as to me ? However, if the whim seized me, I should not consider that, nor anything else ; but the fact is, that success on the stage is not to me an object of ambition ; and I am not sure that it would please me to triumph, although it would doubtless vex me to fail. For these reasons I never will put it to the test. Unless I could beat them all, it would be nothing ; and who could do that ?—not I, nor any man. The drama is complete already ; there can be nothing like what has been. You will say this applies to other poetry also ; true—but the range is wider, and I look upon the path I struck out in C. Harold as a new one ; therefore there can be no comparisons as yet, good or bad. I have done—not much—but enough for me ; and having just turned nine-and-twenty, I seriously think of giving up altogether, unless Rome should madden me into a fourth canto, which it may, or may not.

I am sorry for Maturin, but as he had made himself considerable enough to have enemies, this was to be expected ; he must not, however, be discouraged.

Make my remembrances agreeable to L[eigh] Hunt, and tell him I shall be very glad to hear from him. I have had a fever.

Remember me to Scrope, to Moore, and to everybody.

Ever and truly yours most affectionately, B.

P.S. The “Morning Chronicle” has been taken out of your letter—I suppose in France ; it is useless to send newspapers, they hardly ever arrive—at least, the opposition ones.

Byron to Hobhouse

VENICE, April 14th, 1817.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—On next Thursday (the 17th, I guess) it is my indelible purpose to be upon my way to

Rome—by Ferrara ; and it is not less my intention to lose as little time as the expenditure of it upon sights will admit of. I “prendo la posta,” and think of taking your hint of Rimini, instead of Florence—first for brevity, and next that I may give Leigh Hunt some Nimini Pimini for his “Rimini,” in the way of information about the Malatestas and Francesca ; such as can be picked up from story, or tradition on the spot. Of course I can hardly name any precise day of arrival ; but I shall delay as little as need be, and go by post, according to your advice.

I wish you would lay hands on the letters for me, and secure them against my arrival. I have no notion from whom such can be, as all my correspondents know that I am at Venice—as I know too by the postage they make me pay for this damned nonsense.

I shall write to you more than once on the road to report progress. It would delight me to make our consular entry together, as we did into the city of the Archons.

There is a long manifesto in the papers of Napoleon against Hudson Lowe—who treats him more like an officer (sheriff's) than a gentleman—in which I am pretty sure there is a direct complaint (amongst fifty others) of your book not being delivered to the Emperor. I shall save the paper for you to see if you do not agree with me, that it is to you he alludes.

Dr. Polidori has this day departed, with all the Guilfords he has left alive, for England—a successful young person that, in the drug line ; he has attended Lord Guilford, whom he succeeds in embalming ; he attends Mr. Horner, who is dead, and Mr. Hope's son, who is buried—in short, he seems to have had no luck. He called on me every day. I think he is improved in manner, but he is a little too full of “high-lived company,” Shakespeare, and the “musical glasses.” He travelled to Florence with the sapphic Westmoreland, and that black sheep, Mrs. George Lamb, and thence with the as yet unembowelled Lord G., Lady G., and a Miss Somebody. Frederic North

called yesterday, but I missed him by seeing sights—the Manfrini palace of pictures, which is stupendous ; it is impossible not to be struck with it.

Scrope has won back £3,000, which is something, and augurs well for the rest. Maturin's tragedy has failed, but I believe I told you that.

The Coterie Nolbachique I have heard no more of since I wrote to you, but I shall give the “lengthening chain” a tug or two, that will make it snap before I have done ; however, that is all their own fault, and that of their “complôt.” I wish with all my heart they were in the hands of Jean Jacques—what work he would have made of them.

I have read a good deal of Voltaire lately ; I wish you were with me, for every now and then there is something to kill me with laughing. What I dislike is his extreme inaccuracy ; if his citations were correct he might have upset a hundred —s. Upon that point I do not know what to believe, or what to disbelieve, which is the devil ; to have no religion at all ! all sense, and senses, are against it ; but all belief and much evidence is for it ; it is walking in the dark over a rabbit warren, or a garden with steel traps and spring guns. For my part, I have such a detestation of *some* of the articles of faith, that I would not subscribe to them if I were as sure as St. Peter *after* the cock crew.

The most consistent infidel was the Prussian Frederic—because, during all the disasters of the seven years' war, he was as full of his materialism as when in quiet at Potsdam—and like his friend La Mettrie, who died “denying G—d and the physicians.”

Let me find you at Rome, and there we will project.

Murray begs to have the refusal of your next quarto ; and presents his compliments, though he is very much displeased with your preface.

I commend you to the gods of Rome, ancient and modern.

Yours ever and truly and affectionately, B.

Writing to Murray on 2 April, 1817 (see *Letters*, iv. 94), Byron says: "There have been two articles in the Venice papers: one a review of C. Lamb's *Glenarvon* . . . and the other a review of *Childe Harold*, in which it proclaims the most rebellious and contumacious admirers of Buonaparte now surviving in Europe. Both these articles are translations from the *Literary Gazette* of German Jena."

The following letter was addressed to the editor of the Venice newspaper by Byron :

SIR,—In your journal of 27 March, I perceive an article purporting to be translated from the *Literary Gazette* of Jena, and referring to a recent publication of mine in England. In this there are misstatements which I must be permitted to correct.

It is there asserted that Buonaparte is the protagonist of the poem under a fictitious name.

Buonaparte is not the protagonist of the poem under any name, and where he is mentioned it is openly, and by his own ; the canto is a continuation of a work begun several years ago, and on a very different subject.

It is true that he is treated of, in a part of the poem referring to the battle of Waterloo, as an historical personage. I have spoken of him in the language of my country, and with the freedom of my nation, as a man of great qualities and considerable defects, but with the respect due to misfortune ; I have no hesitation in saying that I see neither crime nor merit in having alluded to an English prisoner without bitterness ; had he been still Emperor of France, and the enemy of my country, I should have either spoken of him differently, or not at all. I did not flatter him then, and that is probably a reason (if we may judge from example) why I do not abuse him now.

It is added that I show myself in this work extremely angry that peace, order, and repose are re-established in Europe ; this is another mistake ; I trouble myself as little about Europe as Europe can possibly trouble

herself about me, but I can hardly be out of humour with a peace which has enabled [me] to see so beautiful a country as Italy.

It is asserted that I do not love my country ; excuse me, I love it well enough to smile at such an imputation, and to look back at my every vote which I have given in her Parliament, as a refutation of the charge.

It is said in this article that Buonaparte is my idol, and that I have written nothing on Lord Wellington ; the first is false, and the latter true, and neither of these circumstances is of any consequence.

The conclusion that I “surpass all the *other admirers* of Buonaparte,” appears to me to be a “non sequitur” of the Literary Gazette of Jena. Are there none surviving of all who once were so ? What is become of France and Italy, to say nothing of other nations of Europe ?

To conclude, I beg leave to assure you, that I am neither admirer nor vituperator of Buonaparte ; were I either one or the other I should not conceal it; the admiration of him has also ceased to be dangerous, but if it were so, I should not conceal it the more on that account.

With regard to the observations in general which have drawn from me this reply, I must be permitted to add that, as a stranger, who is not conscious of having either obtruded his opinions, political or otherwise, upon your countrymen, and who has, during his residence here, lived as retired and without pretension of any kind, as an individual could well do, I should have looked for more courtesy than the insertion of such remarks upon an untranslated foreign work, which it would be as well to understand before it is criticised, or at any rate that the remarks should be more on the work and less on the author.

Byron to Hobhouse

FIRENZE, April 22, 1817.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I am arrived thus far on my way to you at Rome. The “man of learning”¹

¹ Fletcher, Byron’s valet.

forgot some chattels which detained me a day at Bologna.

What a superb face there is in Guido's Innocents in the Gallery ! Not the *shrieking* mother, but the *kneeling* one,—it is the image of Lady Ponsonby ; who is as beautiful as Thought.

I proceed by way of Perugia, as being the longest, and most picturesque—e-e-e-e.

My efforts have been prodigious—up at four—“but *thauts impossible*,”—however, it is as true as the Miracles—and off at five, six, and so forth. I hope (barring accidents) to be with you at the usual average of time (allowing a day for *Terni*, and one to-morrow for the Venus of Canova, and de Medicis, and the tombs of Machiavel, Michael Angelo, and Alfieri, which is and are all I care to see here, were I to stay seasons).

I can't say that I am very much struck with much since a piece of bread (literally *grass bread*), which I brought from the Apennines as a curiosity (pray have Appennines one *p* or two ?) this morning. I took it out of the mouth of a crying child, to whom I gave a Paulo in exchange—you never saw anything like the distress of these poor creatures.

I came by Ferrara, and have crossed the “winding Po,” as well as the “lazy Scheldt” (by Anvers) ; Tasso's cell, and Ariosto's tomb, as well as the old castle, are, I think, very well worth your seeing, and I advise you, whether you return with me or no, to take them—all the Girusalemme, all Guarini's original Pastor Fido, &c. &c., letters of Titian to Ariosto, and Tasso's correspondence about his dirty shirts, are all duly displayed.

From Padova I diverged to Arqua, to Petrarch's present and former habitation ; the present is in the best repair, but both are rather ragged, and somewhat poetical.

The old castle of Ferrara has the actual court as heretofore, where Parisina and Hugo lost their heads, according to Gibbon—I wonder where he got his authority.

Matz is here ; he was promoted into a *Bear* in the natural history of the Bolognese (who might have learned better at the Institute), a character which he has by no means sustained in point of valour, he having been defeated with loss of honour, hair, and almost the small remains of tail which the Docker had left him, by a moderate-sized Pig, on the top of the Pennine Alps :—the Pig was first thrown into confusion, and compelled to retire with great disorder over a steep stone wall ; but somehow he faced about in a damned hollow way or defile, and drove Matz from all his positions, with such slaughter that nothing but night prevented a total defeat.

Recollect, I shall do my best to be up with you soon—I am called to a *warm bath*, and to bed, having been up since four. I set off Thursday, in great haste.

Ever yours very truly, B.

Byron to Kinnaird

ROME, May 11th, 1817.

MY DEAR KINNAIRD,—I have betaken myself to Rome instead of England for a season, but address your answer to Venice, where I shall return in a few days ; at least, such is my intention. Hobhouse is here, but will leave it about the same time, though for a different quarter—at least, for the present.

I shall perhaps take another year of it abroad, or several months, but shall not stir from Venice, or its vicinity during that period. Your letter I have ; Siri and Wilhalm did as they were bid, and the Torlonias are as civil as need be.

I have sent Murray two recent things, one a sort of drama,¹ the other a poem called the “Lament of Tasso,” for which he must pay to my account six hundred guineas, the which you will perhaps have the kindness to arrange for me with him, as heretofore.

I wish you would also desire Hanson to pay in any superflux, however trifling, of Newstead rents, and of

¹ The new third Act of *Manfred*.

another trifle due from Sir R[alph] N[oel]; these probably amount to very little, but still I choose to have that, whatever it is, added to the rest; and something there must be, because it is now a considerable time since the N[ewstead] tenants have paid at all, and something they must have paid lately, if ever. And even these trifles, which look but scant in pounds sterling, seem respectable, and go a good way in francs, and even scudi.

I would also press upon you the necessity of selling, at all risks and at any loss, that property of N^a this summer. I do not care for what, but sold it must be, for, by God, I will procrastinate no longer; so do pray make Hanson act upon this, and make it be put up for sale, and sold if possible.

You say you have been there lately, with Miss Rawdon of the party. Apropos of the Rawdons, you know them all well, don't you? I don't; but there is a foolish story circulated that Mrs. R^a refused to see me at Geneva; and this is said to be on her authority. Now, the fact is, that I did see her to request her to take a letter for Hobhouse, which she did, at the same time showing me Miss R.'s veil, which had received a bullet through it in some adventure with robbers; and is it possible that she can have sanctioned such a story? I can hardly believe it, and it is perhaps scarce worth ascertaining, except that as I have always had a very harmless but sincere admiration of *Bessy*,¹ and her beauty and accomplishments; and have wished her, and wish her, so well, that what would have only made me laugh if asserted of another quarter, has made me feel a little hurt from this.

These are pretty things to plague you with, but never mind. Pray press the sale of Newstead, and do not answer me that "the times," &c.—damn the times, they won't mend in my time—and sold it must be. I would take eighty thousand, *entre nous*, more or less, or anything; but, by the Pope's toe! it must be sold; and this summer, or I shall go mad.

¹ Elizabeth Rawdon. She was related to Lady Adelaide Forbes.

A word from you in your *committee* manner would drive Hanson, who will do nothing of himself, for some d—d reason or other ; this sale would enable me to clear, or nearly, and also empower me to live abroad comfortably, which I have lately done, and to which my ambition is limited. I hate your country, and everything in it, except as an occasional stranger.

Ever yours most truly, B—N.

Byron left Rome on 21 May, and wrote to his sister from Florence on the 27th. He arrived at Venice on 28 May 1817.

P. B. Shelley to Byron

ALBION HOUSE, MARLOW, BUCKS, April 23rd, 1817.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—This letter goes out on an adventure to meet you, though nothing is more improbable than that it should succeed. Rumour says that you are at Venice, and determines that you should make an expedition into Greece and Asia. I wrote to you last under the impression of some horrible circumstances which had occurred to me ; and in the midst of a legal persecution, the most material blow of which I need not inform you has taken effect, though another, viz. that of criminal information against “ Queen Mab,” yet remains suspended. But all human evils either extinguish or are extinguished by the sufferer, and I am now living with my accustomed tranquillity and happiness in a house which I have taken near this town.

But I was incited to write to you, not that I might relate anything concerning myself, but that I might say something of Clare, and of a little being whom we —in the absence of all right to bestow a *Christian* designation—call Alba, or the Dawn. She is very beautiful, and though her frame is of somewhat a delicate texture, enjoys excellent health. Her eyes are the most intelligent I ever saw in so young an infant. Her hair is black, her eyes deeply blue, and

her mouth exquisitely shaped. She passes here for the child of a friend in London, sent into the country for her health, while Clare has reassumed her maiden character. Indeed all these precautions have now become more necessary than before, on account of our renewed intimacy with Godwin, which has taken place in consequence of my marriage with Mary, a change (if it be a change) which had principally her feelings in respect to Godwin for its object. I need not inform you that this is simply with us a measure of convenience, and that our opinions as to the importance of this pretended sanction, and all the prejudices connected with it, remain the same.

And now, what are your plans with respect to the little girl ? I need not assure you of the pleasure which both Mary and myself would feel in contributing all our care to it during your absence, or indeed during any period convenient to you. But we find it indispensable that Clare should reside with us ; and a perpetual danger of discovery that it is hers impends. Nothing would be easier than to own that it was hers, and that it is the offspring of a private marriage in France. But the wise heads suppose that such a tale would make people consider it as mine, and that the inhabitants of this most Christian country would not suffer me to dwell among them under such an imputation. The answer to these difficulties, which would be most satisfactory to us, would be your own speedy return. We hear that the plague rages in Albania, and hope that you will thus be delayed from proceeding into a country from which it is always questionable whether an European will ever return.

As to this country, you will have heard that the ministers have gained a victory,¹ which has not been disturbed by a single murmur ; if I except those of famine, which they have troops of hireling soldiers to repress. Other news of course I cannot know. We spend our time here in that tranquil uniformity which

¹ On Sir Francis Burdett's motion for a Committee to inquire into Parliamentary Representation.

presents much to enjoy and leaves nothing to record. I have my books, and a garden with a lawn, enclosed by high hedges, and overshadowed with firs and cypresses intermixed with apple trees now in blossom. We have a boat on the river, in which, when the days are sunny and serene, such as we have had of late, we sail. May we hope that you will ever visit us ? Clare would be the most rejoiced of all of us at the sight of a letter written by you. I do not tell her that I write to you now. Mary desires to be affectionately remembered to you ; and I remain,

Always yours very faithfully, P. B. SHELLEY.

Byron to Kinnaird

VENICE, May 30th, 1817.

MY DEAR KINNAIRD,—I wrote to you from Rome before my departure. Two days ago I returned to Venice, where you can address to me as usual, as I feel very great reluctance to return to England without absolute and imperious necessity.

Hobhouse I left well, and on the eve of setting out for Naples. He will be up again in Lombardy before he returns to electioneer amongst you, and I shall probably see him here in no very long time.

Two years ago a Mr. Wilson offered eighty thousand pounds for Newstead which (*by advice*) was then declined ; I do not know that he, or anybody else, would give so much now ; though it is in fact worth a good deal more, or would be in decent times ; but I shall never feel a moment's tranquillity till the property is sold ; and I therefore do most urgently press upon you my request, and beg of you to use a little of your *most peremptory* manner with Mr. Hanson to have it once more put in the market (and Rochdale Manor also), and whatever be the result, my obligation to you will be the same. I apply to you in preference to addressing myself to Hanson—firstly, because you are acting for me equally ; and secondly, I know your promptitude and ability in the dispatch of business,

when you choose to set about it ; and I know that unless urged strongly, Mr. H. (from notions which I do not understand), will do nothing to advance the disposal of that property, unless for a price which, in these times, cannot be obtained.

With regard to other points, I have no design or desire to return *wittingly* to England, unless for an occasional and by no means a speedy visit ; to form decisive resolutions is idle, but I tell you very sincerely that if I could or can expatriate myself altogether, I would and will. All my wishes with regard to my property there are bounded by seeing my affairs in some train for settlement, which would be the case in any sale ; but in any case, do not let me be obliged to return to England, if it can be helped. You can have no idea of my disgust and abhorrence to the thought of living there, even for a short time.

I am serious.

My health is very good again ; and during my stay at Rome, I was hardly off my horse's back the whole time, except in poring over churches and antiquities.

You will see that my anxiety about these sales is not from any immediate pressure, as I am in very good present cash, but really and truly from a full sense of the importance of cutting short all delay, because every year adds to the embarrassment, and a few more such years would render all extrication impracticable ; and I should not like to shoot myself during the lifetime of my mother-in-law, and her housekeeper [Mrs. Clermont], because they would be but too happy.

Now do not write to me some of your "exquisite reasons" for a further postponement ; but spur Hanson, who will do if you drive him ; let me hear if something is to be done, and above all, excuse the trouble to which you are so frequently put by

Yours ever and truly and affectionately, BYRON.

Byron and Hobhouse were in Rome together from 5 May to 21 May, when Hobhouse left for Naples.

Byron left on the 28th, returned to Venice, but not to his old quarters in the Segatis' house. He hired a villa, La Mira, on the Brenta and the Palazzo Mocenigo in Venice. Hobhouse rejoined him at La Mira on 31 July, and remained in his company there or in Venice till 18 Jan. 1818.

Byron to Hobhouse

[LA MIRA] June 20th, 1817.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I rejoice in your approximation, and pity your disasters; you will find me near Venice, in a Casino at La Mira (whence I write), whence I will accompany you to Venice.

My abode is not like Diodati, but it is well enough, with more space than splendour, and not much of that; and like all the Venetian marine habitations too near the road—they seem to think they never can have dust enough to compensate for their long immersion.

If you write beforehand I will meet you at Padua on a given day. Fix it—and depend upon my being there.

I protest against, and prohibit the “*laurels*,” which would be a most awkward assumption and anticipation of that which may never come to pass. Besides, they belong to the butchers, and not the ballad-singers.

You would like them naturally, because the verses won’t do without them—but I won’t have my head garnished like a Christmas pie with holly—or a cod’s head and fennel, or whatever the damned weed is they strew round it. I wonder you should want me to be such a mountebank.

Talking of “*bank*” (not mountebank) puts me in mind of Kinnaird, who threatens to come out directly, and to drag the boa-constrictor with him, an it be possible.

I write to you in great haste, to catch you at Florence if possible.

Ever yours most truly, B.

P. B. Shelley to Byron

MARLOW, July 9th, 1817.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—I called on Rogers the other day, on some affairs relating to Hunt, and heard some news of you, viz. that you had been to Rome, and that you had returned to Venice. I had already acquired the preceding piece of information from the Coliseum scene in "Manfred." How is it that I have not heard from you? At first I drew from your silence a favourable augury of your early return. This is in a degree confirmed by the circumstance of Newstead being advertised for sale. I shall be among the first to greet you on your return.

At present I write only to enquire what are your plans with regard to little Alba. She continues to reside with us under a feigned name. But we are somewhat embarrassed about her. We are exposed to what remarks her existence is calculated to excite. At least a period approaches when it will be impossible to temporize with our servants or our visitors. There are two very respectable young ladies in this town, who would undertake the charge of her, if you consent to this arrangement. Clare would then be able to superintend her; and I cannot but recommend this measure to you as a provisional one, if any other is at present inconvenient to you. If you return to England in the autumn, or even in the winter, we should experience no inconvenience from deferring the question until that period.

I ought to tell you that your little girl is in excellent health and spirits. She improves very much, and although small for her age, has an extraordinary degree of animation and intelligence. Our Genevese nurse walks about with her and William all the day in the garden; and she is bathed, like him, in cold water.

I suppose you know that the tyranny, civil and religious, under which this country groans, has visited me somewhat severely. I neither like it the worse nor the better for this. It was always the object of my

unbounded abhorrence. But it may become necessary that I should quit the country. It is possible that the interference exercised by Chancery in the instance of my two other children might be attempted to be extended to William. Should this be the case, I shall depart. And in this case, what shall I do with Alba ?

I have read "Manfred" with the greatest admiration. The same freedom from common rules that marked the 3rd Canto and "Chillon" is visible here ; and it was that which all your earlier productions, except "Lara," wanted. But it made me dreadfully melancholy, and I fear other friends in England, too. Why do you indulge this despondency ? "Manfred," as far as I learn, is immensely popular ; it is characterized as a very daring production.

Hunt has been with me here, and we have oftenspoken of you. Hunt is an excellent man, and has a great regard for you.

How is your health—and—the resolutions on which it depends ? I am anxious to know whether you are free from the disorder by which you were threatened. I have lately had a kind of relapse of my constitutional disease, and if the Chancellor should threaten to invade my domestic circle, I shall seek Italy ; as a refuge at once from the stupid tyranny of these laws and my disorder.

I suppose Clare will write to you herself. Mary desires her kind remembrances to you, and I am,

Ever sincerely yours, P. B. SHELLEY.

Alba has blue eyes, and had dark hair, which has fallen off, and there is now a dispute about the colour. Clare says that it is auburn ; William and she are very good friends.

13, LISSON GROVE NORTH (*Leigh Hunt's*), PADDINGTON,
September 24th, 1817.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—Since I received your letter, my own destination has been so uncertain, that I have

taken no steps about the little girl. I shall, if possible, spend this winter at Pisa, and in that case I shall be myself the lion to the little Una. If I am compelled to remain in England, I shall commit her to the charge of some person on whom I can entirely depend. My health is in a miserable state, so that some care will be required to prevent it speedily terminating in death. Such an event it is my interest and duty to prevent ; nor am I indifferent to the pleasures of this scene of things. They recommend Italy as a certain remedy for my disease.

I told you what I thought of "Manfred." The impression of the public seems, as far as I can judge, to be the same. "The Lament of Tasso" I do not think so perfect and sustained a composition. There are passages, indeed, most wonderfully impressive ; and those lines in which you describe the youthful feelings of Tasso ; that indistinct consciousness of its own greatness, which a heart of genius cherishes in solitude, amid neglect and contempt, have a profound and thrilling pathos which I will confess to you, whenever I turn to them, make my head wild with tears. The *Edinburgh Review* praises "Manfred" excessively, yet far less than it deserves ; because their praise, though unbounded, is studied and cold. You know I live out of the world, and hear nothing. Hunt, who has a very great esteem and interest for you, thinks with me that the 3rd Canto¹ is the finest specimen of your powers yet exhibited. His taste considerably differs from mine in some other respects. He does not like "Manfred," not because it is defective in power and imagination, but because, as he alleges, it administers to a diseased view of things. I should say that some of your earlier writings had that tendency, but that "Manfred" was free from it. We are all most anxious for the 4th Canto, and hope to hear some news of the fair Venetian.

¹ *Childe Harold.*

Since I wrote to you last, Mary has presented me with a little girl. We call it Clara. Little Alba and William, who are fast friends, and amuse themselves with talking a most unintelligible language together, are dreadfully puzzled by the stranger, whom they consider very stupid for not coming to play with them on the floor.

I have been engaged this summer, heart and soul, in one pursuit. I have completed a poem¹ which, when it is finished, though I do not tax your patience to read it, I will send you. It is in the style and for the same object as "Queen Mab," but interwoven with a story of human passion, and composed with more attention to the refinement and accuracy of language, and the connexion of its parts. Some friends speak favourably of it, and particularly Hunt, whose opinion is very flattering. It is to be published—for I am not of your opinion as to religion, &c., and for this simple reason, that I am careless of the consequences as they regard myself. I only feel persecution bitterly, because I bitterly lament the depravity and mistake of those who persecute. As to me, I can but die; I can but be torn to pieces, or devoted to infamy most undeserved; and whether this is inflicted by the necessity of nature, and circumstances, or through a principle, pregnant, as I believe, with important benefit to mankind, is an alternative to which I cannot be indifferent.

I see Newstead has been advertised for sale, and not found a purchaser. So the papers say. Can nothing save Newstead? I wish it had so happened that I had the redemption of it.

Clare is well, but anxious. I have said nothing to her which you do not authorize. Mary is recovering from her accouchement; she is one of those many persons who, together with myself, remember you with interest and regard.

Most sincerely yours, P. B. SHELLEY.

¹ *Laon and Cythna*, published under the title *The Revolt of Islam*.

Byron to Kinnaird

VENICE, November 19th, 1817.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—Inferring that you are by this time in England again, I assail you on the old subject ; to tell you that since your departure I have never heard from the Hansons, from which I infer that Newstead is not likely to be sold, and that I am one degree further in the latitude of hell.

Except a foolish and perplexing passage in a letter of Mrs. Leigh's, I have heard not one word more upon the subject at all, and as her way of putting the most common things is more like a riddle than anything else, I can only say that I am farther than ever from understanding her—or it—or Hanson—or anything or anybody ; and unless you take compassion upon me, and give me a little common sense, I shall remain in the ignorance and anxiety of the last two months upon the same topic.

If you see Augusta give my love to her, and tell her that I do not write because I really and truly do not understand one single word of her letters. To answer them is out of the question, I don't say it out of ill-nature, but whatever be the subject, there is so much paraphrase, parenthesis, initials, dashes, hints—and what Lord Ogleby calls “Mr. Sterling's damned crinkum crankum,” that, sunburn me !¹ if I know what the meaning or no meaning is, and am obliged to study Armenian as a relief.

Hobhouse is here, and very much yours ; of Scrope we know no further ; of you we have talk and regrets. Good-bye—I am just going to a comedy of Goldoni's.

Yours ever and truly, B.

P. B. Shelley to Byron

MARLOW, December 17th, 1817.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—Since I last wrote to you, I have remained in weekly expectation of leaving England, in which case I should have brought you your little girl

¹ Garrick and Colman's *The Clandestine Marriage*.

in person. But my affairs have been so uncertain that after this constant and gradual delay, it is decided that I must abide in England. So soon as this became evident, I looked about for some respectable person to whom I could confide the little Alba. But here is a difficulty which I cannot overcome. You may conceive how scrupulous I should be in the selection ; and you know my secluded mode of life. These circumstances have prevented me from finding any person fit for this purpose. I write therefore to ask,—can you suggest any plan ? Have you any friend, or person of trust, who is leaving England for Italy ? You have a number of powerful friends all devoted to your interests, and anyone of these would be able to procure her conveyance in security to you, if you desired it. I have only to solicit one caution—that under this arrangement Clare's name ought not to be mentioned.

Little Alba, or Clara, as she is now to be called, is grown exquisitely beautiful, and her temper has lost much of its *vivacité*, and has become affectionate, and mild. She is William's playmate, who is so fond of her, that he will be among the many sincere mourners at her departure. They sit on the floor together and amuse themselves for hours in the most sociable way ; little William putting more than half the raisins, &c., that are given to him into her mouth. Clare thinks of christening her after herself, but she delays this *important ceremony* until I hear whether you have a predilection for any other name.

From such a recluse and valetudinarian as me you cannot expect news. I intend, however, in a short time to send you a parcel of books (in about a week), which will speak for themselves ; and if I find that they will escape the embargo, I will inclose some newpapers. My long Poem under the title of "The Revolt of Islam" is almost printed. You will receive in addition to this Godwin's "Mandeville," a Satanic likeness of Childe Harold the first, and two or three other new books.

We should (I need not say) be extremely happy to hear how you are getting on, and what you are doing

—whether you are yet in love, or have been out, and in again. But sincerely, if you knew the interest felt by some of your English friends, I doubt whether you would adhere so severely to the maxim of old—*perit uræ parcere chartæ*, whilst you are so little disposed to spare those which your genius may make eternal. . . .

We hear of the 4th and *last* Canto,¹ but have not yet seen it.

Adieu, my dear Lord Byron.

Most sincerely yours, P. B. SHELLEY.

¹ *Childe Harold.*

CHAPTER VIII

VENICE

(1818)

THE year 1818 was spent almost exclusively in Venice, at the Palazzo Mocenigo, of which Byron had taken a lease. There is not much to relieve the monotony of his mode of life there: he is in constant correspondence with Douglas Kinnaird, who is his trustee, about the sale of Newstead and his Rochdale property, but most of these letters, which have no public interest whatsoever, have been omitted.

In March the Shelleys, accompanied by Clare Clairmont and Byron's child Allegra, went to Milan. Byron wished to have the child sent to him, but Clare, whom Byron refused to meet, was unwilling to part with her. There are long letters from Shelley, who patiently tried to reconcile these opposing views.

Allegra was taken to Venice at the end of April, in charge of a Swiss nurse, Elise Foggi, of whom more was to be heard two or three years later.

During this year the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold* was published, and the First Canto of *Don Juan*, as well as the *Ode on Venice* and *Mazeppa*, were written.

Byron to Kinnaird

VENICE, January 13th, 1818.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—As you have been so lucky with Newstead (which appears to have been very fairly sold),¹

¹ Newstead was sold in November 1817, for £94,500, to Byron's old schoolfellow at Harrow, Colonel Thomas Wildman, who much improved the Abbey, and who died in 1859.

I wish you would try at *Rochdale* too. I should then be quite clear and have some little to boot, which (as it is not settled) I could employ in the purchase of an annuity for my life and for my sister's, supposing we could get the Manor and the minerals tolerably sold.

I am, as you may suppose, very well pleased so far with regard to Newstead; it was and will be a great relief to me, at least, I hope so.

I hope it will not be necessary for me to come to England to sign papers, &c., but if it is, I must, but not before autumn; I would rather have a clerk sent out, I don't want to go to England any more.

When you write, don't write such damned scraps of letters; I owe you a grudge for the last (which was four lines), and you know how spiteful I am. I'll work you, you dog you.

Shelley (from *Marlow*) has written to me about my daughter, (the last bastard one), who, it seems, is a great beauty; and wants to know what he is to do about sending her. I think she had better remain till spring; but will you think of some plan for remitting her here, or placing her in England? I shall acknowledge and breed her myself, giving her the name of Biron (to distinguish her from little Legitimacy), and mean to christen her Allegra, which is a Venetian name.

I hope Scrope is well, and prepared to row H[anson], who has been a long time in setting off.

I have transported my horses to the *Lido*, so that I get a gallop of some miles along the Adriatic beach daily.

H[obhouse]'s notes are rather lengthy, and you are so damned sincere you will be telling him so; now don't, at least, till I come.

I have extended the Canto to 184 Stanzas.¹

Ever yours, (B).

¹ Fourth Canto, *Childe Harold*, expanded to 186 stanzas.

Byron to Hobhouse

VENICE, January 23rd, 1818.

MY DEAR H[OBHOUSE],—You should have looked in Bianchoni's *prose* for the Ariosto thunder and lightning.¹

I have made a clerk copy out the extract, because what I write is scarce legible. Here it is annexed and inclosed, “communibus *sheetibus*.”

I ran to our *Peterkin* and quoted your epistle, “I roared like thunder, he ran like lightning,” you know the rest. I also went to M^o Albrizzi, where there were Rizzo and Francesconi, and a lot of the learned (besides the prettiest girl I ever saw, half Greek, half French, a foreigner from Padua, for the Carnival), all of whom swore that Petrotini^{*} was a liar, and that there was no such thunder.

Petrotini heard of this, and brought me the *printed book*, chapter and verse, next day, from which I read the extract, and the honourable company, with Rizzo at their head, have since owned that “*aveva ragione quel diavolo.*” So put your trust in liars for the future, for Peterkin has proved that his falsehoods are well founded.

I write a few words (like that damned D[ouglas] K[innaid]) just to convey you this annotation; but I will write more at length before you can get home.

Go on and prosper, and believe me ever yrs. most truly, B.

P.S. I miss you damnably; there is no bad fun at the Ridottos, &c., this Carnival. I have lately (as a re-

¹ “The lightning rent from Ariosto's bust
The iron crown of laurels' mimicked leaves.”

Childe Harold, iv. xli.

Before the remains of Ariosto were removed from the Benedictine Church to the library of Ferrara, the bust which surmounts the tomb was struck by lightning and a crown of iron laurel was melted.—*Poetry*, ii. 487.

* Signor Petrotini was the censor of literature. See letter to Murray, 7 Aug. 1817, *Letters and Journals*, iv. 156.

source to supply your loss) taken again to the natives. Mrs. Hoppner has made a son.

Extract from the third vol. (Milan Edition, 1802) of Bianchoni's works, pages 176—177.¹

Della "Lettera al' Signor Guido Savini Arcifisiocritico Sull' Indole ch' un fulmine caduto in Dresden l' anno 1759."

VENICE, March 3rd, 1818.

MY DEAR H[OBHOUSE],—I have received, and returned Murray's packets; and sent two stanzas for insertion near the end, in another cover addressed to M. I think I may have made a slip of the pen in the last word, which should be "*conceal*."

Beppo was full of some gross omissions of words, which I hope will not go so before the public, as it spoils both sense and rhyme, though anybody (if in his damned hurry he allowed anyone to look at the proofs) might see where they occur *what* words ought then and there to come in.

Whether the error be of the MS. or the printer, I know not, but they worry me curiously with their nonsense at this distance—if other people are as sick of reading my late works as I have been, my conscience may release M. from his compact.

Petrotini is truth itself; it is *you* who are inaccurate, and have no memory; which you know I told you *every day*, for the good of your soul, for many months byegone.

You have vexed me mightily about *your notes*, on which I depended seriously, and was quite anxious, though you thought the contrary. However, you must do as you like—only recollect that I protest against withholding the notes, and look upon myself as an ill-used gentleman.

I am glad to hear that Scrope is in repair; as for Kinnaird—since his letter—I say nothing.

If Sir P[hilip] F[rancis] be Junius—I am glad for his sake, and sorry for that of Junius.

¹ This refers to *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, Stanza xli.

Now for Venice. Hoppner has got a son, a fine child.¹ The Carnival was very merry. Madame Albrizzi's Conversazioni are greatly improved; there have been some pretty women there lately.

San Benedetto has oratorios—Haydn and Handel, given by Andrea Erizzo.

I have made several new acquaintances among the learned and noble of the land (or rather water) of this city, and with one or two Inglesi, and an American—sensible people.

The man of learning² has been nearly bursten with an indigestion, and I was obliged to have an old physician rooted out of his bed at three in the matins, and to beat up the “pottecary,”—they gave him a drench which would have cured a horse, and did not kill him, to the great disappointment of his numerous foes—as, he says, all owing to his honesty; “he roared it like any nightingale.”

I have not been riding lately at the Lido, but I hope to be well enough in a few days to resume Cavalkepsing. I met Rose and his *relazione* at Madame's the other night. He is a remarkably agreeable and accomplished man, apparently, but in a weak state of health.³ I believe he moves homeward in Maggio.

I had fifty gossips to say, but am in haste and have forgotten them.

¹ Rizzo. On the birth of this child Byron wrote the following lines:

“ His father's sense, his mother's grace
In him, I hope, will always fit so;
With (still to keep him in good case)
The health and appetite of Rizzo.”

In the seminary of Padua, Moore saw these lines printed in a small neat volume, together with their translation into ten different languages. (See *Life*, p. 374, Edition 1838.)

² Byron's valet, Fletcher.

³ William Stewart Rose (1775–1843), son of George Rose, a politician. Was for four years a Member of Parliament, and afterwards reading clerk of the House of Lords. A friend of Sir Walter Scott. Published a rhymed translation from the *Amadis* of Herberay des Essarts, and a metrical version of *Ariosto*.

Is Scrope facetious? What does he? What says he? Where dines he? What wins he? How is he?

How is Doug.? "the dog, and duck?" you know that's a sign, and the beginning of one of Jackson's songs besides.

"Ah, Coquin, vare is my shild?" You must see Shelley about sending the illegitimate one with a nurse, in the spring.

Yours always, B.

VENICE, March 5th, 1818.

MY DEAR H[OBHOUSE],—I wrote to you yesterday a long and rather peevish letter, for the *Notes* not appearing discomfited me sadly.

I must answer in great haste—the post pressing—one or two points of yours of the 17th just received.

You are right, and I am right—*restore "the"*¹ for "some," which I had altered against my creed, to please G[ifford]; what other alterations I made according to his wish are, I think, properly made, as I am mostly of his opinion except as to "some" and "past Eternity," which last I have not altered, as I think with Polonius, "that's good." And recollect it is to be "*the Enchanters*," and not "*some Enchanters*." I daresay G.'s objection was to the open vowel, but it can't be holpen.

I am, however, greatly obliged by G.'s suggestions, which are well meant, and generally well grounded, and surely good-natured as can be; and one ought to attend to the opinions of a man whose critical talent swept down a whole host of writers at once; I don't mean from *fear*, but real respect for the sense of his observations. I can't give up Nemesis—my great favourite—I can't, can't.

The wicked necessity of rhyming retains "lay" in despite of sense and grammar.² But I bow to Scrope's

¹ "As from the stroke of *the* Enchanter's wand," *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, Stanza i, "past Eternity," Stanza xxvii.

² Hobhouse and Gifford both read a set of the proofs of *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, and made notes and suggestions on them before they were sent out to Venice. Hobhouse wanted Byron to suppress Stanzas cxxxii-cxxxvii. I have these proofs with the MS.

alteration of the preface, and I request that it be adopted forthwith.

You do me too much honour in the association with the friends you mention ; but I can't decline it, though useless, for I never will reside in England. Thank them—and yourself.

Tell me how K[innair]d and his *Siora*, i.e., the *Dog* and *Duck*, do ?

A thousand thanks for y^e letter, and bumpers to Scrope ;—more in a few days.

Ever yours, B.

VENICE, March 25th, 1818.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I protest against the “pints” of your Sober Association—not that my prospect of infringing the rule is very great, for I will not return to England as long as I can help it—but, as an honorary member, I use my privilege of protest. The restriction upon Scrope will have, of course, the usual effect of restrictions. For my own part I have about the same conception of Scrope’s company, and a *pint* (of anything but brandy) that the close reflection of many years enables me to entertain of the Trinity ; unless it be a Scotch pint, and even then it must be the plural number.

I greatly fear that Scrope and I would very soon set up for ourselves—in case of my return like “Marius from banishment to power.”

You will have received by this time some letters—or letter—with y^e returned proofs. I am anxious to hear from, or of Spooney, in the hope of the conclusion of the notes and Byron’s comments and replies. On Stanza lxxxvii Hobhouse remarked, “Recollect you have Nemesis again,” and Byron retorts, “I know it—and if I had her ten times I would not alter once. She is my particular belief and acquaintance, and I won’t blaspheme against her for anybody.”

Gifford’s notes are especially interesting. Almost without exception they suggest some striking improvement and were accepted as such by Byron. In the famous passage about the ocean (clxxvii, clxxxii) he writes in regard to “there let him lay,” “I have doubts about lay,” and Byron replies, “So have I; but the *Post* and *Indolence* and *Illness* !!!”

N[ewstea]d sale ; and I want you to spur him if possible into the like for ROCHDALE. A clerk can bring the papers (and, by-the-bye, my *shild* by Clare, at the same time. Pray desire Shelley to pack it carefully), with *tooth-powder, red only* ; magnesia, soda-powders, tooth-brushes, diachylon plaster, and any new novels good for anything.

I have taken a Palazzo on the Grand Canal¹ for two years, so that you see I *won't* stir. So pray don't mention that any more. With regard to the proxy,² I will renew it with pleasure, if it can be done without dragging me to London for it ; otherwise, NOT till I find it necessary to come on business. There was no occasion for anybody's name with Lord H., but undoubtedly your own would have greater weight with me than any other, had such been requisite. As for the Whigs, *I won't* leave them, though they will me, if ever they get anything to scramble for. Pray do you stand this ensuing election ?

I wrote to Augusta the other day.

Remember me to Scrope—why don't he write ? Whenever you come out, pray bring him ; but I hope that you will turn parliament man, and stay at home. I shall have great glee in seeing your speeches in the Venetian Gazette.

Yours, B.

P.S. The man who makes your wig says, that he sent the wig you made me order to Geneva, to Hentsch, who, I suppose, wears it himself, and be damned to him. You ought to pay Holmes, as it is all your doing.

I dined with Hoppner, and Rose on Monday—all well.

P. B. Shelley to Byron

[HOTEL REALE] MILAN, April 13th, 1818.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—I write chiefly to inquire whether you have received a letter from me dated Lyons ; and to inform you that your little girl has

¹ Palazzo Mocenigo.

² Votes in the House of Lords could, in those days, be given by proxy.

arrived here in excellent health and spirits, with eyes as blue as the sky over our heads.

Mary and I have just returned from the Lake of Como, where we have been seeking a house for the summer. If you have not visited this sublime and lovely scene, I think it would repay your toil. Will you spend a few weeks with us this summer? Our mode of life is uniform, and such as you remember it at Geneva, and the situation which I imagine we have chosen (the Villa Pliniana) is solitary, and surrounded by scenery of astonishing grandeur, with the lake at our feet. If you would visit us—and I don't know where you could find a heartier welcome—little Allegra might return with you.

Mary unites with me in best regards, and Clare bids me ask if you have received a lock of Allegra's hair which she sent in the winter.

Most sincerely yours, P. B. SHELLEY.

P.S. I have got some books for you, packed up at the bottom of a large box of my own. Shall I send them to Venice?

I cannot conceive how my letter from Lyons should have failed.

MILAN, April 22nd, 1818.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—Clare will write to you herself a detail of her motives and feelings relating to Allegra's being absent as you desire. Her interference as the mother of course supersedes *mine*, which was never undertaken but from the deep interest I have ever felt for all the parties concerned. Here my letter might well close, but that I would not the affair should finish so.

You write as if from the instant of its departure all future intercourse were to cease between Clare and her child. This I cannot think you ought to have expected, or even to have desired. Let us estimate our own sensations, and consider, if those of a father be acute, what must be those of a mother? What should we

think of a woman who should resign her infant child with no prospect of ever seeing it again, even to a father in whose tenderness she entirely confided ? If she forces herself to such a sacrifice for the sake of her child's welfare, there is something heroically great in thus trampling upon the strongest affections, and even the most unappeasable instincts of our nature. But the world will not judge so ; she would be despised as an unnatural mother, even by those who might see little to condemn in her becoming a mother without the formalities of marriage. She would thus resign her only good, and take to herself, in its stead, contempt on every hand. Besides, she might say, " What assurance have I of the tenderness of the father for his child, if he treats the feelings of the mother with so little consideration ? " Not to mention, that the child itself would, on this supposition, grow up either in ignorance, or in contempt of one of its parents ; a state of things full of danger. I know the arguments present in your mind on this subject ; but surely, rank and reputation, and prudence are as nothing in comparison to a mother's claims. If it should be recorded that you had sought to violate these, the opinion of the world might indeed be fixed on you, with such blame as your friends could not justify ; and wholly unlike those ridiculous and unfounded tales which are told of every person of eminent powers, and which make your friends so many in England, at the expense of those who fabricated them. I assure you, my dear Lord Byron, I speak earnestly, and sincerely. It is not that I wish to make out a case for Clare ; my *interest*, as you must be aware, is entirely on the opposite side. Nor have I in any manner influenced her. I have esteemed it a duty to leave her to the impulse of her own feelings in a case where, if she has no feeling, she has no claim. But in truth, if she is to be brought to part with her child, she requires reassurance and tenderness. A tie so near the heart should not be rudely snapt. It was in this persuasion that I hoped (I had a thousand other reasons for wishing to see you)

that you would have accepted our invitation to the Pliniana. Clare's pain would then have been mitigated by the prospect of seeing her child with you, and she would have been reassured of the fears which your letter has just confirmed, by the idea of a repetition of the visit. Your conduct must at present wear the aspect of great cruelty, however you justify it to yourself. Surely, it is better if we err, to err on the side of kindness, than of rigour. You can stop when you please ; and you are not so infirm of purpose that soothing words, and gentle conduct need betray you in essential matters further than you mean to go.

I am a third person in this painful controversy, who, in the invidious office of mediator, can have no interest, but in the interests of those concerned. I am now deprived of the power to act ; but I would willingly persuade.

You know my motives, and therefore I do not fear to ask you again to come to see me at Como ; and, for the sake of your child's welfare, to soothe Clare's wounded feelings by some reassurances in the meanwhile. As I understand her, with these assurances she would send the child. You are afraid, perhaps, that she might be inclined to tease you ; but her first impression on seeing your letter (which, by-the-bye, I did not mean her to see) was that if your coming to see her depended upon her absence, she would willingly place herself *en pension* in the city, during that period. But in fact, so far as gossip is concerned, if you have any motive for caring about it, they cannot say more at Como than they do at Venice. You have no idea of the absurd stories which the multitude believe of you ; but which every person of sense, and indeed every enlightened circle of our own countrymen, laugh at. This is the common lot of all who have distinguished themselves among men. When Dante walked through the streets, the old women pointed at him, and said, " That is the man who went to Hell with Virgil ; see how his beard is singed." Stories unlike this, but to the full as improbable and monstrous, are propagated

of you at Venice ; but I know not wherefore you should regard them. With us you would find a sincere, and frank welcome ; and as we should be all unknown, or might be, I can see no loophole for calumny.

If your messenger arrives before Clare and you have come to an understanding on this subject, I shall detain him until further orders, unless your instructions are explicit that he shall not stay. Allegra has an English nurse, a very clean and good-tempered young woman, whom, in case of a termination of these melancholy differences, I can safely recommend to you.

The expenses of which you speak have been in our family so extremely trifling, that I know not how to name any sum that will not leave me, what I cannot accept, a pecuniary profit. Perhaps you will be kind enough not to place me in so degrading a situation, as to estimate a matter of this kind.

I feel confident that you will attribute to its right motive the earnestness with which I have written on this painful subject ; and believe me, my dear Lord B., most sincerely attached to your interest and honour,

P. B. SHELLEY.

Allegra is daily improving in beauty, but she is suffering just now from cutting her teeth.

On 11 March the Shelleys and Clare Clairmont set out for Italy, taking with them Allegra, and as her attendant a Swiss maid, Elise, who accompanied the child to Venice on 28 April. They reached Milan on 4 April.

MILAN, April 30th, 1818.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—It certainly gave me much pleasure to be able to bring your little girl to Italy, as indeed I was puzzled to find a person to trust her with ; but the purpose of my journey was, I lament to say, in no manner connected with it. My health, which has always been declining, had assumed such symptoms that the physicians advised me to proceed without delay to a warmer climate. Allow me also to repeat

my assertion that Clare's late conduct with respect to the child was wholly unconnected with, and uninfluenced by me. The correspondence from which these misinterpretations have arisen was undertaken on my part solely because you refused to correspond with Clare. My conduct in the affair has been simple, and intelligible. I am sorry that I misunderstood your letter ; and I hope that on both sides there is here an end of misunderstandings.

You will find your little Allegra quite well. I think she is the most lovely and engaging child I ever beheld. Tell us what you think of her, and whether, or no, she equals your expectations. Her attendant is not the servant whom I alluded to in my last letter ; but a Swiss, who has attended my own children, in whom Mrs. S[helley] entirely confides, and who even quits us somewhat unwillingly, and whom Mary parts with solely that Clare and yourself may be assured that Allegra will be attended almost with a mother's care.

Clare, as you may imagine, is dreadfully unhappy. As you have not written to her, it has been a kind of custom that she should see your letters ; and I daresay you know that you have sometimes said things which I do not think you would have addressed to her. It could not in any way compromise you to be cautious in this respect, as, unless you write to her, I cannot well refuse to let her see your letters. I have not seen any of those which she has written to you ; nor even have I often known when they were sent.

You will receive your packets of books. Hunt sends you one he has lately published ; and I am commissioned by an old friend of yours to convey "Frankenstein" to you, and to request that if you conjecture the name of the author, that you will regard it as a secret. In fact, it is Mrs. S[helley]'s. It has met with considerable success in England ; but she bids me say, "That she would regard your approbation as a more flattering testimony of its merit."

Address your next letter "Poste Restante, Pisa," as we leave Milan for that city to-morrow. We have

been disappointed in our house at Como ; and indeed, I shall attempt to divert Clare's melancholy by availing myself of some introductions at Pisa. Clare is wretchedly disconsolate, and I know not how I shall calm her, until the return of post. I ought to say that we shall be at Pisa long before the return of post —when we expect (pray don't disappoint us) a letter from you to assure us of the safe arrival of our little favourite. Mary begs to unite with me in best regards ; and to express her affection, and anxiety, about little Allegra, whom she has been accustomed to regard almost as one of her own children.

I ought to say that by an unfortunate mistake I left behind me the 2nd part of the "Voyage to Corea," and a poem called "Beppo," which Murray had sent to me for you. Peacock has a parcel for me, which I expect at midsummer, in which these will be included. Elise's wages with us were 20 louis.

My dear Lord Byron, yours always sincerely,
P. B. SHELLEY.

Byron to Hobhouse

VENICE, April 17th, 1818.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I was paralysed yesterday, or the day before, or Wednesday, by a letter from young Spooney,¹ containing the news of a messenger for Geneva, and desiring me to repair there !!! If I stir from Venice—by anything but absolute force—may—but no matter for that. Nothing but downright necessity, or destiny will ever make me return to England—and there's an end.

I need hardly add that the messenger should be directed to go on to Venice—if not, he may go to Hell. I won't meet him half-way in either case.

It is easier and less expensive for him to proceed here, than for me to repair there. Damn that infernally stupid Chancery Lane, and its inmates with their cursed Circumbendibus and Crinkum Crankum, as Mr. Sterling calls it.²

¹ Hanson's son Charles.

² *The Clandestine Marriage.*

Pray stir up Spooney with a long pole, and don't let me be buffooned in this way with his "barbarous topography." I dare say he thinks that Venice is in the valley of Chamouni.

In any case I repeat that I won't stir. I would not for the best friend I have in the world (always 'bating Scrope, who is not *my* friend, but "everybody's Huncamunca"),¹ far less for my own *inconvenience*.

And now I wonder that *you* should allow such doings —you who know my way of thinking.

Ever yours very truly and affectionately,
BYRON.

VENICE, April 24th, 1818.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I have written to Murray on Sotheby's affair,² which response he will communicate.

I suppose that you are in possession of the note and books, and I then and there told you my reasons for believing Sotheby the writer.

I will not go to Geneva, and I look upon it as a great piece of ignorance, and unfriendliness in those who have endeavoured to trepan me into such an infamous journey. I would sooner perish than undertake it, at least upon such motives.

By this post I have written to Kinnaird on business. I must have monies, and Hanson and Murray are to make some payments—or ought. The cursed stupidity of sending me the clerk and parchments to Geneva, is beyond measure vexatious; but this comes of having friends. I wish they were all damned—from Pylades to the present day.

He must be eked on to Venice at any—or all events. I will not stir—"no, not for Venice"—nor *from* Venice. The expense must be much less for the fellow to come to me, than for me to be lugged over the Alps

¹ Fielding's *Tom Thumb*.

² He had received a copy of the *Prisoner of Chillon* with marginal notes from some anonymous correspondent whom he guessed to be Sotheby. See *Letters and Journals*, iv. 218–22.

towards your country, which I hate as I do my mother-in-law.

Now I have sworn, and am easier.

Did not you get two additional stanzas for Canto 4th ? I believe I sent them—if not arrived, tell me.

Shelley has got to Milan with the bastard, and its mother ; but won't send the shild, unless I will go and see the mother. I have sent a messenger for the shild, but I can't leave my quarters, and have "sworn an oath." Between attorneys, clerks, and wives, and children, and friends, my life is made a burthen, and it is all owing to *your* negligence and "want of memory."

I regret to hear of Scrope's not winning ; such a man's destiny ought not to be in a dice box, or a horse's hoof, or a gambler's hand.

Venice is Venice. I go now often to the Benzona's,¹ the oddest and pleasantest of elderly ladies, and her conversazione better than the Governor's, or the Albrizzi's.

I have got a sty in my eye. Madame S. has got an ague-fever. I have taken part of Gritti's palace for *three* years, so don't think of dragging me over the Channel.

Byron to Kinnaird

VENICE, April 23rd, 1818.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—I will *not* go to Geneva, and I look upon the proposition as a very gross neglect on the part of Hanson, and an affront on that of my

¹ "The charms of the Countess Marina Benzoni have been sung by all who even tinkled a guitar to the tune of 'La Biondina' in Gondoletta ; but the spell of her Venetian manner, its softness and *naïveté*, are less susceptible of description. Recollections of the brilliant and pleasurable circles over which she once presided, by many a pleasant anecdote well recited, and often recurring to the present sad and hopeless state of her unfortunate country ; to the last doing its honours by foreign visitants, and still presenting the lineaments and colouring of the portraits of Titian and Giorgione. She resembles the priestess of some desolated temple, still hovering round the ruined altars whose fires are extinct, and festivals eclipsed for ever." Lady Morgan's *Italy*, ii. 472.

friends, including you, Davies, Hobhouse, and everybody else. The messenger must come here—is it not evident that the expense and trouble must be less for the man and papers to come to me, than for me to go to the man and papers ? At any rate, and at any cost, I won't stir ; and if anything occurs, it is all *your* faults for not taking better care of my interests, besides wanting to drag me a mile nearer to your infernal country.

“ Poor Maria ”—um ! I do not understand the particulars, nor wish to hear them ; all I know is that she made your house very pleasant to your friends, and as far as I know, made no mischief (which is saying infinitely for a woman), and therefore whatever has, or may happen, she has my good will, go where she will. I understand that you have provided for her in the handsomest manner, which is in your nature, and don't surprise me :—as far as prudence goes, you are in the right to dissolve such a connection ; and as to provocation, doubtless you had sufficient, but I can't help being sorry for the woman—although she did tell you that I made love to her—which, by the God of Scrope Davies ! was not true—for I never dreamed of making love to anything of yours, except sixty pints of brandy, sixty years old—all, or the greater part of which, I consumed in your suppers. God help me, I was very sorry when they were no more.

Now to business—“ Shylock ! I must have monies,” so have at Spooney for Noel's and Newstead arrears, and have at Murray for coming copyrights, and let me have a credit forthwith—I am in cash, but I don't like to break in upon my *circular* notes—in case of a journey—or changing my residence, but look to my finance department, and above all, *don't lecture me*, for I won't bear it, and will run savage.

Make the *messenger proceed* to Geneva ; and send him a letter therefor, that we may conclude the Newstead sale, and if you can sell, or settle a sale for Rochdale—do. Newstead has done well so far.

Do not suppose that I will be induced to return

towards England for less than the most imperious motives, but believe me always

Yrs. B.

P.S.—Don't mind Hobhouse, he would whistle me home—that is, to his home if he could ; but "thaut's impossible" for the son and heir of Sir W^m Meadows.¹ So look to it, and don't conspire against me or my quiet.

Byron to Hobhouse

VENICE, May 19th, 1818.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—That is right—row and spur Spooney—and let Murray disburse, however I don't mean to pin him—if he feels losing, I will let him down as many pounds as he likes. Whether the public like the "Poeshie" or no, is no matter—the profit is the point ; let me know the facts, but don't let Murray be a loser. I threw in "Beppo" to eke him out in case of accidents, but let what is to be paid be paid readily, or steadily, because I see that Spooney dawdles—damn him. Had I followed your advices I should have now been hating myself at Geneva, waiting for his messenger—who was not there at the time ; for I wrote to Hentsch the banker to kick his backside over the Simplon, and lo, he was not come.

I rejoice for the illustrations and the preface, but I wish you in Parliament. *Try*, there is time 'twixt this and October.

Tell L^d Kinnaird that the lady to whom Vendiamini would *not* introduce him—and to whom Rizzo might have introduced him—but I suppose shuffled because he was an admirer) within the last ten days has become as far as a Cappriccio—Roba mia—I asked Rizzo to introduce me, who declined for fear of an Austrian colonel, nephew to Marechal Bianchi (who is her

¹ *Love in a Village.* Bickerstaff.

Cavalier Servente), so I found a way by means of Soranzo, another Venetian noble, and friend of mine . . . to-day is the seventh—but no Sabbath day—for we meet at midnight at her milliners.

She is the prettiest Bacchante in the world.

The Segati and I have been off these two months, or rather three. . . .

I have taken part of the Mocenigo palace¹ for three years (on the Grand Canal) and have been much among the Natives since you went, particularly at the Benzona's—who is a kind of Venetian (late) Lady Melbourne.²

Recollect my demands—money—monies—tooth-powder—magnesia—soda powders—Spooney's papers and good news of you and yours, always and ever.

VENICE, May 27th, 1818.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Spooney writes to promise the writings for signature, to set out for Venice the *end* of *this moon*—a pretty figure I should have cut at your former requisition—waiting for the Attorneo. And let me beg of you and Douglas to keep an eye on Spooney's acquittance, and accounts of my Jew debts, &c. &c. at the period when the monies and discharges are in action—and let me have *his bill* survized by (what Mrs. Heidelberg calls) “the Counsellors *at law*,” and in short as you are my friend, show yourself as *sich*—or why did I write a preface?

Talking of preface reminds me of the book which like “Gill, comes tumbling after.” I have never heard of it since the day of publication, and y^e letter two days after, which doth not answer very splendidly for the publication, because had there been anything good to tell, you would have told it amongst you. I don't much mind that, but I should like to have “my *fee*” and I desire that you will have a proper look out “for my *fee*.”

¹ Rent (furnished) 4,800 francs per annum. Say, £190, or 200 louis d'or.

² Lady Melbourne died 6 April, 1818.

I desire money—and magnesia—and soda powders—and any new publications, and tooth-powder, and bark, and diachylon plaster, and my love to everybody.

Yours, B.

P.S. There must be some balance from Newstead and old Noel, and whatever it may be let me have it,—by the way *old Joe* must not be forgotten.¹ I give carte blanche about him—but *let him above all have all possible comforts and requisites in any case.*

I can't write the prologue for F^a—“I'm not in the vein,” but I wish you joy and success.

My bastard [Allegra] came a month ago—a very fine child—much admired in the gardens and on the Piazza—and greatly caressed by the Venetians from the Governatrice downwards.

VENICE, June 15th, 1818.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Almost the first news I have had of Canto 4th has been from Milan in a long, and bitter letter against *you* from Di Breme² (too long to send by post to England), in which he complains of very unfair representations on *your part* (in the notes), about the Italian Romantici, and some stuff you have put in the illustrations besides, about Foscolo,³ who seems one of the Charlatans, who usually have taken you in, as far as I could observe.

I shall write to him, that as I never read the notes, he who wrote them may answer for himself, but he says he shall write to you himself immediately.

I have just been swimming from Lido to the Riva,

¹ Joe Murray, Byron's old retainer at Newstead.

² Louis Arborio Gattinara Abbé de Brême (1781–1820), Abbé of Calmo, almoner to Eugène Beauharnais. See *Recollections of a Long Life*, ii. 40–48.

³ Ugo Foscolo (1778–1827), a poet, dramatist, and critic. He was at Milan when Byron arrived in 1816. Shortly afterwards he came to England, where he died. Foscolo wrote many articles in the *Quarterly Review* and the *Edinburgh Review*. He was an ardent Italian patriot.

where the gun-brig lies. That is near the Piazzetta, so that you will excuse a little languor. I went in with Hoppner, Scott (*not* the Vice-Consul), and the Chevalier Mingaldo (a noted Italian swimmer who traversed the Danube in Napoleon's campaigns), and, I flatter myself, gave them enough of it, for none of them went even half the distance (or even reached the gardens), but got back into their gondolas and dressed, and were probably at dinner before I had done my progress.

Mingaldo seemed the best fish among them, but not in the true style, at least not bottom. Hoppner and he both spewed when they got out into their boats.

Yours ever and truly, B.

VENICE, June 25th, 1818.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I have received yours of the 5th and have had no letters from any one else, nor desire any, but *letters* of credit.

Since my last I have had another *swim* against Mingaldo, whom both Scott and I beat hollow, leaving him breathless and five hundred yards behindhand, before we got from Lido to the entrance of the Grand Canal. Scott went from Lido as far as the Rialto, and was then taken into his gondola. I swam from Lido right to the end of the Grand Canal, including its whole length, besides that space from Lido to the canal's entrance (or exit), by the statue of Fortune, near the Palace, and coming out finally at the end opposite Fusina and Mestri, staying in half-an-hour, and I know not what distance more than the other two; and swimming easy the whole distance, computed by the Venetians at four and a half of Italian miles. I was in the sea from half-past four till a quarter-past eight without touching or resting.

The Scott I mention is not the Vice-Consul, but a traveller who lives much at Venice, like Mysen.

He got as far as the Rialto, swimming well; the Italian miles behind and knocked up, hallooing for the boat.

As you are full of politics I say nothing, except that I wish you more pleasure than such trash could give me.

Yours very truly and affectionately, B.

P.S. *The wind and tide were both with me.*

VENICE, June 28th, 1818.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Pray tell Murray to *pay* in money, *not* in bills. I will have *ready* money. I am sure I always give him ready poetry, and let him pay quickly.¹

No letters from him, and but one from you of late. I shall positively offer my next year to *Longman*—and I have lots upon the anvil—and inform Master Murray that by next post I shall write to Moore, to propose to *Longman* for the time to come. I will teach the Admiralty publisher a little attention to his correspondents.

As you do not deserve any kind, or *kind* of letter, I say no more, but am yours, as you behave.

B.

P.S. I shall be really put to very great inconvenience if Spooney and Murray don't disburse, and that quickly.

Where is Spooney's messenger? *Geneva, Geneva?* pretty advice. But you are all alike—never had man such friends.

You say “why don't I come among you?” I confess I don't see any great allurement to you, or yours, for the wish—and certainly none to me—besides, as I have told you a thousand times, I prefer my present residence.

VENICE, August 3rd, 1818.

DEAR H[OBHOUS]E,—Now that my monies are come, you may scold as much as you please. It is your turn now. It was mine when I had neither answer to my letters nor attention to my requests. As for my “social qualities,” I will back them against yours, or any of the Burdett committee (except Scrope). I will

¹ The money was received by 10 July.

drink with you, laugh with you, or do anything except talk with you—for any wager in wines you choose to name.

You monster, you ! I have heard of your “campaigning at the King of Bohemy,” and your *speeches*, which *seriously*, I am told, were very good ones, as well as Kinnaird’s, throughout the election¹; but you don’t shine as purveyors, and you must have cut a queer figure spouting among the decanters (most of them about the same height as yourself), in boots and spurs, to appease the angry and famished ragamuffins, who had been licking Lew Chew and his Islanders for you.

Enclosed is Breme’s scrawl. Answer him if you like, but I have given him a Siserana, I promise you, in mine already. I have no notion of his airs, he has brought all Italy into a squabble about his damned doctrines (like the old stag of the Seicentisti, and the previous Cruscan quarrels—poor devils, they are like *Moses* in the Vicar of W[akefield]—too happy in being permitted to dispute about anything), and then expects to be thanked for them by us youth. Row him, I say, he gives you devilish bitter words, and I long to see you by the ears, that I do.

I shall be very glad of the corn-rubbers. As to Spooney, I don’t know what *he* calls expedition, but *you* always said he was a damned dawdle, if not a rogue—and now you “snub me when I’m in spirits,” for coming over to your opinions.

Yours always, B.

P. B. Shelley to Byron

ESTE, September 13th, 1818.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—I have been four or five times on the point of setting out to Venice, and have

¹ “I took a very active part in the Westminster election, when the candidates were Sir F. Burdett, Sir S. Romilly, and Sir Murray Maxwell” (*Recollections of a Long Life*, ii. 104). The death of Sir S. Romilly caused a vacancy soon after. Hobhouse was chosen as the Whig candidate.

been always disappointed by some unexpected circumstance. Mary and the children arrived last Sunday, and my little girl has since then been dangerously ill; so am detained an anxious prisoner here for four or five days longer. She is now better, and I hope to be able to see you at the end of the week. We have domesticated ourselves unceremoniously here, and find it, as I think you would find it, a most delightful residence.

Mary desires her kind remembrances. Clara her love. Allegra is quite well, and whenever she is drest calls for papa. William and she are grown fast friends.

Most sincerely yours, P. B. SHELLEY.

Shelley went to Venice on 22 Sept., and was followed on the 24th by Mary Shelley, and her child Clara. The little girl was very ill on the journey, and died soon after their arrival at Venice. The Hoppners, touched by their misfortune, invited the Shelleys to stay at their house. On 25 Sept. Shelley called on Lord Byron.

Byron to Hobhouse

VENICE, September 30th, 1818.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Spooney writes that he will not advance beyond Geneva. I have answered that he may return, for I would not cross to meet him, were it only to Fuscina or Mestri. I said so in the spring, and I repeat it now. He hints possible delays, and incompletion of sale. Be it so, I gave him ample time—it is no fault of mine, and if Wildman don't complete, I presume that I shall at least have the property again. But, whatever may be the consequences, my decision on that point is what it was in the spring, and would be *in secula seculorum*. Pray tell him on his return from his fool's (or rogue's) errand, and that I should see him, and all Chancery Lane in Hell, before I would cross

a canal for them. What! am I to be made the Polichinelle of an attorneo at thirty years of age? He may be damned—*they* may be damned!

I have written to Douglas Kinnaird, and beg you to assist him with advice in a committee upon this tedious mountebank's eternal dawdling. Do what you can, and make him do what you please, only recollect that I neither can, nor will quit home upon his call. Why could he not send a clerk? I'm sure I have no wish to see the original.

Ever yours very truly and affectionately, BYRON.

P.S. I don't revise, and I write in a hurry, and in a passion, so excuse errata, and remember that I *won't stir*—sunburn me if I do!

P.S. 2nd. I saw the other day by accident, your "Historical, &c." The essay is *perfect*, and not exceeded by Johnson's Poets, which I think the type of perfection. I shall write again, but my rage at present has made me quite unwell. Excuse bother.

Mrs. Shelley to Byron

ESTE, October 3rd, 1818.

DEAR LORD BYRON,—I take advantage of an opportunity of a person going to Venice to send you "Mazepa," and your ode [to Venice], with, I hope, not many errors, and those partly from my not being able to decipher your MS.

It will give me great pleasure (if the Fornaretta will permit) if you will send me your "Don Juan" by the bearer. You may trust him, as we often employ him. At any rate write a line to say that you have received this safe, as I do not like to send your MS. until I know that my copy is in your hands. You will see by my copying "Mazepa" so quickly that there is more of pleasure than labour in my task. Allegra is perfectly well.

M. W. SHELLEY.

Byron to Hobhouse

VENICE, November 11th, 1818.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—By the favour of Lord Lauderdale¹ (whotells me, by the way, that you have made some very good speeches, and are to turn out an orator—*seriously*), I have sent an “Œuvre” of “Poeshie,” which will not arrive probably till some time after this letter—though they start together—as the letter is rather the youngest of the two. It is addressed to you at Mr. Murray’s. I request you to read—and having read—and if possible approved, to obtain the largest, or (if large be undeserved) the fairest price from him, or anyone else.

There are, firstly, the first canto of *Don Juan* (in the style of Beppo and Pulci—forgive me for putting Pulci *second*, it is a slip—“Ego et Rex meus”) containing two hundred *Octaves*, and a dedication in verse of a dozen to Bob Southey, *bitter* as necessary—I mean the dedication ; I will tell you why.

On his return from Switzerland, two years ago, he said that Shelley and I “had formed a League of Incest, and practised our precepts with, &c.” He lied like a rascal, for they *were not sisters*, one being Godwin’s daughter, by Mary Wollstonecraft, and the other the daughter of the present Mrs. G. by a *former* husband. The attack contains no allusion to the cause ; but some good verses, and all political and poetical.

Besides this “*pome*,” there is “*Mazeppa*,” and an Ode on Venice. The last not very intelligible, and you may omit it if you like. *Don Juan* and *Mazeppa* are perhaps better ; you will see.

The whole consists of between two and three thousand lines. You can consult Douglas K. about the price

¹ James Maitland, Earl of Lauderdale (1759–1839). Before he succeeded to the title (1789) he was M.P. for Malmesbury and an adherent of C. J. Fox. In 1806 he was Minister Plenipotentiary in France, but in 1807 he retired from public life, and owing to his health lived much abroad.

thereof, and your own judgment, and whose else you like, about their merits.

As one of the poems is as free as La Fontaine ; and bitter in politics, too ; the damned cant and Toryism of the day may make Murray pause ; in that case you will take any bookseller who *bids best*. When I say *free*, I mean that freedom which Ariosto, Boiardo, and Voltaire—Pulci, Berni, all the best Italian and French—as well as Pope and Prior amongst the English—permitted themselves ; but no improper words, nor *phrases* ; merely some situations which are taken from life. However, you will see to all this when the MSS. arrive.

I only request that you and Doug. will see to a fair price, “as the Players have had my goods too cheap” ; if Murray won’t, another will. I name no price—calculate by quantity and quality ; and do you and Doug. pronounce, always recollecting, as impartial judges, that you are my friend, and that he is my banker.

Spooney arrived here to-day, but has left in Chancery Lane *all* my *books*, everything in short, except a damned (something) SCOPE. I have broke the glass, and cut a finger in ramming it together—and the *Corn-rubbers*—but I have given it him !

Only think ; he has left everything—everything except his legal papers. You must send off a *man* on *purpose* with them on the receipt of this. I will pay anything within *three hundred pounds* for the expense of their transportation ; but pray let them be sent without fail, and by a person on purpose. They are all in Chancery Lane (I mean the *Lane*, not the Court, for they would not come out of that in a hurry) with young Spooney ; extract them, and send a man by chaise on purpose ; never mind expense, nor weight. I must have books, and magnesia, particularly “*Tales of my Landlord*.”

I’ll be revenged on Spooney—five men died of the plague the other day, in the Lazaretto—I shall take him to ride at the Lido ; he hath a reverend care and

fear of his health. I will show him the Lazaretto ; which is not far off you know, and looks nearer than it is. I will tell him of the five men. I will tell him of my contact with Dr. Aglietti in whose presence they died, and who came into my box at the (St. Benedetto's) Opera the same evening, and shook hands with me. I will tell him all this ; and as he is hypochondriac, perhaps it may kill him.

The monster left my books, everything; my magnesia, my tooth powder, &c. &c., and wanted me besides to go to Geneva ; but I made him come. He is a queer fish ; the Custom House officers wanted to examine, or have money, he would not pay ; they opened everything. "Ay, ay," said he, "look away—*Carts, Carts.*" That was his phrase for *papers*, with a strong English emphasis and accent on the *s*, and he actually made them turn over all the Newstead, Rochdale, and Jew and Chancery papers, exclaiming "*Carts, Carts,*" and came off triumphant without paying a *Centime* ; the officers giving up the matter in despair, finding nothing else, and not being able to translate what they found.

But I have been in a damned passion for all that, though this adventure nearly reconciled me to him.

Pray remember the man and books ; and mind and make me a proper paction with Murray, or others. I submit the matter to you and Doug., and you may show the MS. to Frere, and William Rose, and Moore, and whoever you please.

Forgive this scrawl, and the trouble ; and write, and believe me ever and truly.

B.

P.S. Lord Lauderdale set off to-day, the 12th Nov^r, and means to be in England in about a month.

VENEZIA, November 23rd, 1818.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—You say nobody knows nought of Luke Scalabrino, the magnificent correspondent who went between Tasso and his washerwoman. Lo the enclosed quotation !

You will wonder at my research, but it is not mine, but an English gentleman's now here (Mr. Ingram of DURHAM, “can anything good come out of *Nazareth* ?”) who told me this—sent me the boke. I have caused a copy to be made and sent it by post.

Spooney is gone back with a long letter¹ to *you* and *Kinnaird*. Lord Lauderdale has a cargo of “poeshie,” and is on his way too.

So Sir S[amuel] R[omilly] has cut his throttle for the loss of his wife ! Mr. Thwackum “saddled Square with a judgment”² when he bit his tongue ; when R. was legally mischief-making between *my wife* and me three years agone or so, did he think that in less than thirty-six moons, NEMESIS would level him in a cross-road for a like privation ? See what comes of the Good old Gods, and remember how I always believed in, and worshipped them—they wove my good stanzas.³

The news arrived here the night before Spooney’s departure. Spooney would not believe that it was for the loss of his wife that Romilly “cut through both his Jugglers” (as Mr. Pyne said of poor Whitbread), but swore it must be because he “could not get the seals.” He—Hanson—had no idea of not surviving one’s wife ; he said “it was a boyish trick.” What said the Crowner ? “Lunacy,” no doubt. Be it so.

(*The remainder is missing.*)

Byron to Kinnaird

VENICE, December 9th, 1818.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—You should have advised me before, as my friend, my trustee, my power of attorney, and my banker, because, though I generally suspect a man of being a rascal, I do not set him down as an actual felon (even although an attorney) without some overt indications, or at least previous hints ;

¹ This letter is already published : *Letters and Journals*, iv. 269.

² *Tom Jones*, by Fielding.

³ Stanzas cxxii to cxxxvii, Canto IV, *Childe Harold*.

and therefore you should have told me long ago of Spooney.

The parchments which I have signed (to the best of my recollections, and) according to what they were represented, were the conveyances to Major Wildman ; releases (or whatever the legal cant may be) for the trustees, and answers for the Exchequer relative to the Rochdale Cause ; but I cannot say that I *read over any* of these parchments, nor *noted* them, so that you had better (and as my *Potestas* you have the right) insist on a sight of all of them. Mr. Townsend was witness for Major Wildman (a young man, clerk in the office of Wildman's lawyer, and Wildman's friend —Wildman will give you his address) ; Hanson's son, Newton by name, and my valet, the illustrious Fletcher, witnessed also. You now know all that I know.

I sent by Hanson a very long letter addressed to *you* and *Hobhouse jointly, upon the subject in general of my affairs* ; and as I trust it will be safely delivered by Hanson, you will act upon it, according to your judgment and inclination ; of the papers I know nothing but the endorsements and signatures. I should not have understood a syllable of their jargon had I read them, and till this moment I did not suspect *falsification* or *substitution* ; but now I do because you say so ; though, like all advice, it comes somewhat of the latest.

Hanson has been gone this fortnight—Lord Lauderdale three weeks. The former conveys my papers, the second my cargo of Poesy. As both have a reference to finance, pray don't forget either, for money is power and pleasure, and I like it vastly.

I request that the *interest* due on Wildman's purchase money, from April 1818 till now (about two thousand seven or eight hundred pounds) be transmitted to my credit, together with the purchase of Don Juan and Mazeppa, &c., which ought to bring a good price—there is more in quantity than my former cargos, and for the quality you will pronounce. By the last two posts I have sent some additions to the "*Poeshie*."

You have put me in a fuss, as you always do with your damned letters, because you never say anything till after.

How was I to dream that any of those blasted parchments might be garbled or falsified ? or that Hanson was so damned a rogue as you hint him ? At any rate, there must be justice and law for me, as well as another ; but I beg you will *scrutinize*. If not, I can do nothing ; you might, at any rate, have said all this before.

Scrope's letter I have answered. I cannot go to England. I wish Hobhouse all possible success. I am told that he speaks admirably well, and am sure that he will do wonders—win or lose. But he will win. I write in haste and in no good humour, and am yours very truly and affectionately,

B.N.

P.S. In my letter to Scrope, my reasons are explained for not coming ; in my letter to you and Hobhouse my affairs are touched upon fully. As for the rest, the trustees should look to them, and perhaps some of my friends may glance that way when they have leisure.

Hobhouse is right to stand at any rate. It will be a great step to have contested Westminster, and if he gains, it is everything. You may depend upon it, that Hobhouse has talents very much beyond his *present rate*, and even beyond his own opinion. He is too *fidgetty*, but he has the elements of greatness, if he can but keep his nerves in order.

I don't mean *courage*, but *anxiety*.

Byron to Hobhouse

VENICE, December 12th, 1818.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—You do well to stand for Westminster ; the very contest is an advantage. You show yourself, and prove your talent for eloquence (which I can assure you I have heard from all hands to be very great). You have a fine field, and now if

the Tories should outnumber you, the triumph will be yours in honour, honesty, and ability¹; and what is the rest worth? If you gain, you start with the greatest advantages. The successor of Fox; as representative of one of the first of our cities; with good previous exercise for oratory in the senate by practice in the forum (during the election). I saw your late speech in Galignani's Messenger, and with all the disfiguration and curtailment of the reporter, it was the best of the day.

You do not start a bit too late—you are thirty-two. (I see they talked about *youth*—so much the better; be young as long as you can.) Burke was not in the house till thirty-five years of age; Lord Mansfield not till thirty-seven, and have we ever had better? What have all these later younglings done? What are Ward, and Mills, and W. Lamb, and Master Lambton?

Peel (my old schoolfellow)² is the best of all these, but even he is a disappointed man, because not already Minister.

Pitt's exchequership at twenty-three has been the ruin, not only of his country, but of all its coxcombs; they want to be premiers at five-and-twenty, and are ill-used if they are not.

I see you have been in a devil of a hurry to give a "pledge." Why give it till they ask it? The fact is, they do not want *annual parliaments*, but *annual elections*. That I take to be the truth; but I see no harm in either, for assuredly till a great blow be struck, the present system will only conduct Castlereagh to his object.

A letter came to me from Scrope, which I have answered, with my reasons for not returning at present

¹ He was defeated after a hard struggle in 1819, but was elected in March 1820. In the meantime he was imprisoned in Newgate for a passage in his pamphlet, *A Trifling Mistake*, in answer to Lord Erskine.

² Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850). Entered Parliament in 1809; entered Lord Liverpool's Cabinet as Home Secretary in 1822; became Prime Minister in 1834.

to England. If I thought it would be of use to you, I would ; but I think the contrary, and remain to play the Pomponius Atticus to your Cicero—or “ Archias Poeta,” if you like it better. By the Lord ! your consulship (or rather tribunate), shall be written in Greek Hexameters.

You may be assured that if anything *serious* is ever required to be done, in which my insignificance can add an 0 to the number, I will come over, and there, “ like little wanton boys we’ll swim, &c.,” till Scrope despairs of the Republic.

The progress of your contest will be to me extremely interesting. I had written to you by Hanson, and sent a packet by Lord Lauderdale (an eulogist of your speaking), &c., &c., but I knew not of your politicals, so pray let all that stand till you are chaired ; that you may be is the fairest hope and wish of

Yours ever, B.

P.S. When you and I were cantering last year along the *Lido*, and I had all the difficulty possible to persuade you back to England, what were the odds against Sir Samuel Romilly’s election, against his cutting his throat, against the succeeding (and success) of yourself ? For the lawyer—he was one of Miss Milbanke’s advisers, so much for Nemesis. I never would have forgiven him living, and will not affect to pity him dead—I hate him still ; as much as one can dislike dust.

I see the Queen is gone to join Semiramis and Zenobia—the Princess last year, the Queen next. The tragedy of Tom Thumb is nothing to it.

“ *Remember, Milor—that delicaci ensure every succès.* ”

Thursday the 10th inst. was Ada’s birthday, a three year old. “ Ah ! Coquin—vhare is my shild ? ”

VENICE, January 19th, 1819.

DEAR H. AND DEAR K.,—I approve and sanction all your legal proceedings with regard to my affairs, and

can only repeat my thanks and approbation. If you put off the payments of debts "till *after* Lady Noel's death," it is well; if till *after* her damnation, better, for that will last for ever; yet I hope not; for her sake as well as the creditors I am willing to believe in purgatory.

With regard to the Poeshie, I will have no "cutting and slashing," as Perry calls it; you may omit the stanzas on Castlereagh, indeed it is better, and the two "*Bobs*" at the end of the 3rd stanza of the dedication, which will leave "high" and "a-dry" good rhymes without any "*double* (or single) entendre," but no more. I appeal, not "to Philip fasting," but to Alexander drunk; I appeal to Murray at his ledger, to the people, in short, Don Juan shall be an entire horse, or none.

If the objection be to the indecency, the Age which applauds the "Bath Guide," and Little's poems, and reads Fielding and Smollett still, may bear with that. If to the poetry, I will take my chance. I will not give way to all the cant of Christendom. I have been cloyed with applause, and sickened with abuse; at present I care for little but the copyright; I have imbibed a great love for money, let me have it; if Murray loses this time, he won't the next; he will be cautious, and I shall learn the decline of his customers by his epistolary indications. But in no case will I submit to have the poem mutilated. There is another Canto written, but not copied, in two hundred and odd Stanzas, if this succeeds; as to the prudery of the present day, what is it? Are we more moral than when Prior wrote? Is there anything in "Don Juan" so strong as in Ariosto, or Voltaire, or Chaucer?

Tell Hobhouse his letter to Di Breme has made a great sensation, and is to be published in the Tuscan and other gazettes. Count R. came to consult with me about it last Sunday; we think of Tuscany; for Florence and Milan are in literary war; but the Lombard league is headed by Marti, and would make a difficulty of insertion in the Lombard gazettes;

once published in the Pisan, it will find its way through Italy by translation or reply.

So Lauderdale has been telling a story ! I suppose this is my reward for presenting him at Countess Benzoni's, and showing him what attention I could.

Since he tells a story about me, I will tell one about him. When he landed at the *Custom House* from Corfu, he called for "*Post horses, directly.*" He was told that there were no horses except mine nearer than Lido, unless he wished for the four bronze coursers of St. Mark, which *were at his service*.

I am, yours ever, B.

Let me have H.'s election immediately. I mention it *last* as being what I was least likely to forget.

If I had but had twenty thousand a year I should not have been living now. But all men are not born with a silver or gold spoon in their mouths. You say nothing of Mazeppa. Did it arrive ?

On the day when the following letter was written, Byron wrote to Murray asking him to print for private distribution fifty copies of *Don Juan*. He says : " Print *Don Juan* entire, omitting, of course, the lines on Castlereagh, as I am not on the spot to meet him. I have a second Canto ready, which will be sent by and bye. By this post I have written to Mr. Hobhouse, addressed to your care. . . ."

VENICE, January 19th, 1819.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I rejoice in the perspective of your success ; it shall be like "Gordon's Palates" ; while I trust that Maxwell's pretensions will be "a wretched attempt," like "Maclaurin's *Made Dish*." Take your fortune, take it at the "flood" ; now is your time, and remember that in your very start you have overtaken all whom you thought before you ; above

all, don't *diffide* in your *health*, leave that to poets, and such fellows ; and don't be afraid of your own talents. I tell you, as I have told others, that you think too humbly of them ; you have already shewn yourself fit for very great things, “the greatest is behind” ; and once in the house, I hope to see you the best heard in it, and first read out of it. Above all, recollect that it is all luck in this world ; that all men have their time offered, that this is yours, seize it.

Your letter to Di Breme has greatly pleased here, and we have had a consultation about the best way of publishing. Some expressions are too strong for the Censure, and must be softened ; and Madame A[lbrizzi] is in a fuss about her “*Serail*,” but I have begged Count R. to intercede hard for the standing of the Seraglio ; it seems to me the cream of the correspondence. Pray remember me to all friends, to the Scrope, and let me hear how you advance.

I am ever and truly yours, B.

CHAPTER IX

VENICE
(1819)

1819 was a memorable year in Byron's life. On 6 April he wrote to Hobhouse : "I am dull too, for I have fallen in love with a Romagnola Countess from Ravenna, who is nineteen years old, and has a Count of fifty—whom she seems disposed to qualify, the first year of marriage being just over."

It is unnecessary to give an account of Byron's association with Teresa Guiccioli, which has been fully narrated elsewhere. It made a great change in his mode of life ; if we cannot say from bad to good, we can at least say from worse to better, and such liaisons were very leniently regarded in Italy.

From this time forward there are more and more frequent allusions to his dissatisfaction with the life he had been leading. "I cannot repent me (I often try) so much of anything I have done as of anything I have left undone. . . . This is a bitter thought, and it will be difficult for me ever to recover the despondency into which the idea naturally throws one. Philosophy would be in vain, let us try action. I feel—and I feel it bitterly that a man cannot consume his life at the side and on the bosom of a woman and a stranger—but I have neither the strength of mind to break my chain nor the insensibility which would deaden its weight."

In June he, with his child Allegra, joined the Countess and her family at Ravenna, stopping on

the way at Ferrara, where he made a study of the Ariosto MSS., and returning to Venice by way of Bologna in August.

The principal literary work of the year was the writing of the first four cantos of *Don Juan*. The disputes which arose about the publication will be found described in *Letters and Journals* and *Poetry*. He also wrote the so-called *Stanzas to the Po* and *A Letter to the Editor of My Grandmother's Review*.

Byron to Hobhouse

VENICE, Janaury 25th, 1819.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—The most satisfactory answer to your letter is acquiescence—and I acquiesce in the *non-publication*, but I am a scribbler fond of his bantling—and you must let me *print fifty* privately, about a dozen of which I wish to be distributed (and will send you the list of to *whom* hereafter) by Mr. Murray; from *this* I cannot recede, and I hope it will seem to you enough.

The other two poems are not worth a separate publication—or any price that may be mentioned. Murray had best publish them in his next edition of all the poems as an adjunct, for I *will not* allow their separate appearance. I have another canto of Juan finished, which I will send by and bye, after the printing of the other. The motto “*domestica facta*” merely meant *common life* which, I presume, was Horace’s meaning—the *Julian* adventure detailed was none of mine; but one of an acquaintance of mine (*Parolini* by name), which happened some years ago at Bassano, with the Prefect’s wife when he was a boy; and was the subject of a long case, ending in a divorce or separation of the parties during the Italian Viceroyalty.

If you suppose I don’t mind the money you are mistaken; I do mind it most damnably, it is the only

thing I ever saw worth minding—for, as *Dervish* told me, it comprehends all the rest. But honour must be considered before it, and friendship also, and it is sufficient for me that you disapprove of the publication, though I by no means approve of your disapprobation.

But for the printing I must stickle on account of my vanity. “Nothing is more vain than Vanity,” so says Strap in “*Roderick Random*,” and here you have a fresh example.

Your answer to the Knight-Abbot¹ has made the Devil’s own row—and great admiration of the composition and writer have been suscitated. Breme is seriously ill, and Monti frantic in consequence. I enclose you Countess Benzone’s letter to me, for your Epistle has become the great *desideratum* of all the conversazione. Publication is to follow, but you know the Italian custom, they canvas FIRST. The Albrizzi, the Michelli, the Benzone, all celebrated for literature, wit, and gallantry for the last half century, and for beauty the other half, contested for the perusal; I think the orthography of your name will please you.²

The Chevalier Mingaldo, a friend of mine, came to me to-day to beg it for a poetical friend of his; and, in short, you know Italy and Venice, and may imagine that such a thing is as likely to raise a new war, as ever the raption of the Sabines.

Rizzo told me last night at the Opera that the letter was half translated, and they only waited its recovery from the Benzone’s to traduct the other half.

For my own opinion, I think your answer a Capo d’Opera; and this, *not* because every body else thinks so, for you know that is not amongst my family of vices.

Ever yours, B.

¹ Abbate Cavaliere di Breme, see p. 83.

² Enclosed, a letter from Countess Benzone, with the name spelt *Hobens*.

Fragment of letter to Mr. Hobhouse from Venice, January, 26th, 1819.

P.S. Corpo ed' anche, &c., Sangue di, &c., O! Marie! Can' della Madonna tixe un Gran, &c., &c., &c.—All your compliments have not sweetened me a bit, and Scrope too! *that* is “the unkindest cut of all.” I meant to have added a *P.S.*, but I wish first to hear that you are *M.P.*, which is, I may say, what I have most at heart. Do not omit to report your progress.

I had, some time ago, a letter from Miss Boyce, the actress; it is full of sentiment and love, and the most sublime diction; but all of a sudden breaks off into “And the worst of all is, that they want to cut down our salaries.” Tell it to D. Kinnaird, as this “cutting and slashing” is the result of his not tumbling down the trap-door, from which he was saved by Miss Tree, then columbine; and add that “I say ditto to Miss Boyce.” The worst of all is the cutting down the salary. Capite? or in Venetian, has tu Capio?

Byron to Kinnaird

VENICE, January 27th, 1819.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I have received a very clever letter from Hobhouse against the publication of “Don Juan,” in which I understand you have acquiesced (you be damned). I acquiesce too, but reluctantly.

This acquiescence is some thousands of pounds out of my pocket, the very thought of which brings tears into my eyes. I have imbibed such a love for money, that I keep some sequins in a drawer, to count and cry over them once a week; and if it was not for a turn for women (which I hope will be soon worn out), I think I should be able, not only to clear off, but to accumulate.

God only knows how it rends my heart to part with the idea of the sum I should have received from a fair bargain of my recent “poeshie.” The sequins are the great consideration—as for the applauses of posterity, I would willingly sell the reversion at a discount—even to Mr. Southey, who seems fond of it; as if people’s grandchildren were to be wiser than their

forefathers—although, no doubt, the simple chances of change are in favour of the deuce-ace turning up last—just as in the overturn of a coach, the odds are that your backside will be the first out of the window.

I say, that as for fame and all that, it is for such persons as Fortune chooses—and so is money. And so on account of this damned prudery, and the reviews, and an outcry, and posterity, a gentleman who has “a proper regard for his fee” is to be curtailed of his “*darics*” (I am reading about Greece and Persia). This comes of consulting friends. I will see you all damned before I consult you again. What do you mean now by giving advice when you are asked for it? Don’t you know that it is like asking a man how he does, and that the answer in both cases should always be “*Very well, I thank you*”?

Yours ever, B.

P.S. Give my love to Frere, and tell him he is right, but I never will forgive him, or any of you.

VENICE, February 22nd, 1819.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—Tell Hobhouse that “*Don Juan*” must be published—the loss of the copyright would break my heart. All that he says may be very fine, and very true; but my “regard for my fee” is the ruling passion, and I must have it.

I have written to let him omit the two “bobs” high and dry, and I think all the rest very decent.

Mr. Murray has not answered, although I have written very often, with additions, notes, &c. If that superb gentleman don’t mind his manners I shall not trouble him further.

Yours in haste. It is the last but one of the Carnival days, and I have been up till eight in the morning for these ten days past.

Yours ever, B.

VENICE, March 6th, 1819.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—After mature consideration I have determined to have *Don Juan* published (*anony-*

mously) ; and I venture to request you will bargain with Mr. Murray for that, for Mazeppa, and for the Ode, and also for a *second* canto of two hundred and six stanzas, which I have begun to copy out—(it is finished), and will send at leisure. You will get what you think a fitting price.

Your opinion and that of the others is, I daresay, quite right, and that there will be a war of criticism and methodism in consequence ; but “I have supped full of horrors,” and it must be a “dismal treatise” that will make my “fell of hair” stir and move nowadays.

The poem has merit, you say. Very well ; leave the rest to the chances, and recollect that nothing would console me for the omission of the monies. I love money, so get what you can for the MS. present and to come. The second canto is more correct, but, I think, at least equal to the first in the whole, as fun and poetry.

I name no sum for Murray, but you may suppose that I shall greatly admire the largest possible.

Don’t answer me with any more damned preachments from Hobhouse about public opinion. I never flattered that, and I never will ; and when the public leaves off reading what I write, the booksellers will tell us, and then I shall respect it more than ever I did yet, —though I would not change a word to regain it even then, unless it had my own approbation.

Yours ever, B.

P.S. We have had, a fortnight ago, the devil’s own row with an elephant. He broke loose, ate up a fruit shop, killed his keeper ; broke into a church ; and was at last killed by a cannon-shot brought from the Arsenal. I saw him the day he broke open his own house ; he was standing in the Riva, and his keepers trying to persuade him with *peck loaves* to go on board of a sort of ark they had got. I went close up to him that afternoon in my gondola, and he amused himself with flinging great beams that flew about over the water in

all directions ; he was then not *very* angry, but towards midnight he became furious, and displayed the most extraordinary strength, pulling down everything before him. All musketry proved in vain ; and when he charged, the Austrians threw down their muskets and ran. At last they broke a hole and brought a field piece, the first shot missed, the second entered behind, and came out *all but* the skin at his shoulder. I saw him dead the next day, a stupendous fellow.

Fletcher is well. I have got two monkeys, a fox, and two new mastiffs, Matz is still in high old age. The monkeys are charming. Last month I had a business about a Venetian girl who wanted to marry me, a circumstance prevented, like Dr. Blifil's¹ espousals, not only by my previous marriage, but by Mr. Allworthy's being acquainted with the existence of Mrs. Dr. Blifil. I was very honest, and gave her no hopes, but there was a scene, I having been found at her window at midnight, and they sent me a priest, and a friend of the family's, to talk with me the next day, both of whom I treated with coffee.

Byron to Hobhouse

VENICE, April 6th, 1819.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I have not derived from the Scriptures of Rochefoucault that consolation which I expected “in the misfortunes of our best friends.”

I had much at heart your gaining the Election, but from “the filthy puddle” into which your patriotism had run you, I had, like Croaker, my bodings, but like old “Curry-comb” you make “so handsome a corpse,” that my wailing is changed into admiration.

I must write again in a few days, it being now past four in the morning ; it is Passion week, and rather dull. I am dull too, for I have fallen in love with a Romagnola Countess from Ravenna, who is nineteen years old, and has a Count of fifty—whom she seems

¹ *Tom Jones.* Blifil is the original of Sheridan's “Joseph Surface” in *The School for Scandal*.

disposed to qualify, the first year of marriage being just over.¹

I knew her a little last year at her starting, but they always wait a year, at least generally. I met her first at the Albrizzi's, and this spring at the Benzona's—and I have hopes, sir,—hopes, but she wants me to come to Ravenna, and then to Bologna. Now this would be all very well for certainties; but for mere hopes; if she should plant me, and I should make a “fiasco,” never could I show my face on the Piazza. It is nothing that money can do, for the Conte is awfully rich, and would be so even in England,—but he is fifty and odd; has had two wives and children before, this his third (a pretty fair-haired girl last year out of a convent; now making her second tour of the Venetian Conversazioni) and does not seem so jealous this year as he did last—when he stuck close to her side—even at the Governor's.

She is pretty, but has no tact; answers aloud, when she should whisper—talks of age to old ladies who want to pass for young; and this blessed night horrified a correct company at the Benzona's, by calling out to me “*mio Byron*” in an audible key, during a dead silence of pause in the other prattlers, who stared and whispered their respective *serventi*.

One of her preliminaries is that I must never leave Italy. I have no desire to leave it, but I should not like to be frittered down into a regular Cicisbeo.

What shall I do? I am in love, and tired of promiscuous concubinage, and have now an opportunity of settling for life.

Yours, B.

Byron to Kinnaird

VENICE, April 7th, 1819.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—Why do you lay the “three per cents” on me?—it was Spooney and you, “you dour crandy eater,” that did it. I wanted and expected 5 per cent. and more, so I did.

¹ Teresa Guiccioli, nata Gamba.

As for the “*Don Juan*” you may talk till you are hoarse. I sent the second canto, and will have both published, all for the fee. What care I for the “*public attunement*,” did I ever flatter the rascals? Never, and never will, let them like or not—I shall soon know by Murray’s long or short face, and then I will plant the rogues, but till then I will have my monies.

Now pray Mr. Dougal, do something for Countess Giorgi’s son (now with Mr. Rose), whom I commended to your protection many moons ago. His mother asks after him every day, and besides Rose is my friend, so do get a clerkship for the lad, who is a fine young man of a good family.

I wish H[obhouse] had not been so fiercely Burdetted; his losing his election surprised us here a good deal.

Sam Rogers’ “*Human Life*” I have not seen nor heard of, except from you and Hobhouse. I am sorry for his failure (if it be a failure), and that’s more than he would be for mine.

He is a “cankered carle,” but a poet for all that.

I have been so long out of your sphere as to have almost forgotten the taste of Scrope’s jokes, but I am glad to get them even at second hand. The dog never writes, which he should do, considering that in all probability we shall not meet again.

Tell Murray that I sent Canto second, by last post, that I have written to H[obhouse]—and to M. himself.

Health and safety. Yours ever, B.

VENICE, April 24th, 1819.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—Damn “*the Vampire*.¹” What do I know of Vampires? It must be some bookselling imposture; contradict it in a solemn paragraph.

I sent off on April 3rd the 2nd canto of “*Don Juan*”

¹ *The Vampire* was a story by Dr. Polidori, published in the *New Monthly Magazine* and attributed to Byron. Under pressure from Hobhouse, Polidori wrote an explanatory letter to the *Courier Letters and Journals*, iv. 286, and Hobhouse’s letter of 3 June, *infra*.

addressed to Murray, I hope it is arrived—by the Lord it is a Capo d'Opera, so “full of pastime and prodigality,” but you sha'n't decimate nor mutilate, no—“rather than that, come critics into the list, and champion me to the uttermost.”

Nor you, nor that rugged rhinoceros Murray, have ever told me, in answer to *fifty* times the question, if he ever received the additions to Canto *first*, entitled “Julia's letter” and also some four stanzas for the beginning.

I have fallen in love, within the last month, with a Romagnuola Countess from Ravenna, the spouse of a year of Count Guiccioli, who is sixty¹—the girl twenty.

She is as fair as sunrise, and warm as noon, but she is young, and was not content with what she had done, unless it was to be turned to the advantage of the public, and so she made an éclat, which rather astonished even the Venetians, and electrified the Conversazioni of the Benzona, the Albrizzi, and the Michelli, and made her husband look embarrassed.

They have been gone back to Ravenna some time, but they return in the winter. She is the queerest woman I ever met with, for in general they cost one something one way or other, whereas by an odd combination of circumstances, I have proved an expense to HER, which is not *my* custom, but an accident; however it don't matter.

She is a sort of Italian Caroline Lamb, except that she is much prettier, and not so savage. But she has the same red-hot head, the same noble disdain of public opinion, with the superstructure of all that Italy can add to such natural dispositions.

She is also of the Ravenna noblesse, educated in a convent, sacrificed to wealth, filial duty, and all that.

I am damnably in love, but they are gone, for many months—and nothing but hope keeps me alive *seriously*.

Yours ever, B.

¹ Writing to Hobhouse on 6 April, he gives his age as fifty.

Byron to Hobhouse

VENICE, May 17th, 1819.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I return by this post the *second* proofs; the first went by the former post. If the subsequent ones don't reach you by return of post, you need not wait for them, but publish without, as I leave Venice next week, and have ordered my letters *not* to be sent after me, my stay being uncertain, as my plans are.

I have looked over the proofs, and *not* acquiesced in the suggestions. By the way, there is one line we will alter towards the close of canto 1st. Instead of,

“I thought of dyeing it the other day”

(i.e. hair) put

“I thought about a Wig the other day.”

Why are you anxious about Donna Inez? She is not meant for Clytemnestra, and if she were, would you protect the friend of whom I may say, like “Jacopo Rusticucci” in Dante:

“e' certo
La fiera Moglie piu ch' altro mi Nuoce,”¹

and was it not owing to [her] that they tried to expose me upon earth to the same stigma, which the said Jacopo is saddled with in hell?²

What! Is a ludicrous character of a tiresome woman in a burlesque poem to be suppressed, or altered, because a contemptible and hypocritical wretch may be supposed to be pointed at? Do you suppose that I will ever forgive, or forget, or lose sight of her, or hers, till I am nothing?

You will talk to me of prudence, and give good reasons for “one's own sake,” &c. &c. You will have the satisfaction of giving good advice, and I, that of not taking it. Excuse my warmth; it is the cursed subject which puts me out of temper.

¹ Inferno, Canto XVI, line 45.

² See also Canto VI, lines 80 to 89.

Neither you, nor Murray say aught of *Canto second*, from whence I infer *your disapprobation*, and *his fear* to have any *opinion at all*, till he knows what the public think. And the Douglas has not written to me about "the fee"; why the devil don't he make the (not social) contract?

Don't go to America; there are leagues enough between us already.

What is all this about Dr. Polidori? who, I perceive, has got into "the magazine?"¹ You may at least thank me for finding you always something to be done; I thought it was a French imposition, and wrote to Galignani's editor to beg of him to contradict "the Vampire," and "a residence in Mitylene." What is this residence?

I saw Sir William Drummond the other day; the same evening he was robbed at an inn by a Mr. Wraxall (an English gentleman), of cash and trinkets. Wraxall has been taken, and is "like to be troubled at Size" about it. He hath since confessed, but is still in custody; he was in the army, and wears a Waterloo ribbon. The theft was of various coins, Napoleons, &c., rings, jewels, and what not; the young man is of amiable manners, excellent conduct, and is son to a baronet. He had previously cheated, and lied a good deal in various cities, but this is his first overt attempt at the direct conversion of property.

There has been a splendid opera lately at San Benedetto, by Rossini, who came in person to play the harpsichord. The people followed him about, cut off his hair "for memory"; he was shouted, and sonnetted, and feasted, and immortalized much more than either of the Emperors. In the words of my Romagnola (speaking of Ravenna, and the way of life there which is more licentious than most here), "Cio ti mostri un quadro morale del' Paese; e ti basti." Think of a people frantic for a fiddler, or at least an inspirer of fiddles.

¹ *The Vampire*: see p. 108.

I doubt if they will do much in the liberty line.

An elephant went mad here about two months ago, killed his keeper, knocked down a house, broke open a church, dispersed all his assailants, and was at last killed by a shot in his *posteriora* from a field-piece brought from the *Arsenal* on purpose.

Write whether I am to hear from you or no ; write. But don't wait for my further revision of proofs. I can't be gone for less than a moon, and it would be losing time. Publish Juan anonymously, *without* the dedication. "Mazeppa" and "the Ode" as you like, but don't send the proofs here.

I sent Murray a second copy of Julia's letter, of which the first copy seems not to have arrived.

Perhaps this may be more fortunate.

Yours ever, B.

Hobhouse to Byron

WHITTON PARK, June 3rd, 1819.

MY DEAR BYRON,—I have been just looking over your two last sheets of the first Canto.¹ You will determine when you see it in print what you think will be the "*verum atque decens*" respecting it. I should not sit down to bother you now were it not to tell you that I have been engaged in a correspondence with Polly-dolly about you. A cursed trashy tale, called and entitled the "Vampyre," was lately advertised in your name, with a notice that you had written it in concert with the Shelleys, who produced "Frankenstein," a sort of Bath Easton Vase Miscellany, at the same time. I recollect your telling me something about a picnic of that kind at Diodati, so I thought it possible Dolly might have purloined your tale, and was now covering his nakedness with it. The moment, however, I saw this "Vampyre" I, who like all cox-combs know you by your style, swore the whole to be a vile imposture, and Dolly's whole and sole doing. And sure enough I was right, for he owned it upon my

¹ "Don Juan."

writing to him, and Murray got out the whole story. Now, however, he publishes a letter in the papers, stating that though the "Vampyre" in "*its present form*" is not yours, yet the "*ground work*" is "*certainly*" yours. To this he puts his damned Italian polysyllabic name. He has also made a sort of bargain with *Colburn*—he who published *Glenarvon*—for his *travels*, of which he states the chief attraction to be your Lordship's "*vie privée*"; so *Colburn* told my informant. I wrote to *Polly* thereupon; he said he *pretended to the rank and name of a gentleman*, poor devil! and never intended such a treachery. But since his letter about the "*ground work*" of the "Vampyre," I think it would be advisable for you to send to Murray, or if you like, to me, a note to be published in the papers, totally depriving the Doctor of any copyright in *ground works*; or he will continue making use of your name. I fear he is a sad scamp; but you know I told you that you were wrong in taking him—you know I did. No news. Catholic question lost last night in the Commons only by *two* votes. Lord Donoughmore and Colonel Bagwell fought a duel; Lrd D.'s pistol missed fire. Sir R. Wilson, Lord D.'s second, decided it was a shot. Bagwell's pistol missed Lord Donoughmore—matters made up—quarrel about the Tipperary election. *Come va la Romagnuola?* Is that the way to spell it?

Why did you not pickle the elephant? I have no doubt you have preserved him in the second Canto, which by the way I have not seen. I hope it is more decenter than the first, else were we all shamed.

Ever yours, JOHN HOBHOUSE.

Byron to Hobhouse

FERRARA, June 3rd, 1819.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I left Venice on the first of the moon with the intention of expatiating into Romagna as far as Rimini, but whether I shall go on as far as that city and Ravenna, or stay in Bologna till

the people I was going to see come there—such being their idea for about the middle of this month—is more than I can pretend to say, being quite undecided as usual.

We have been in a taking at Venice (that is Fletcher and myself, fundholders) at some accounts of the stocks, and of an intention of *Peel's* to demand a sacrifice of twenty-five per cent. of the monied interest. I like Peel—he was my old school-fellow, he is a man of talent, and my early acquaintance, but I would *peel* him into a second Marsyas, and make Saint Bartholomew look like the man in armour on Lord Mayor's day, in comparison of his state after flaying, and then line the Treasury Bench with his skin—rather than give up *any* per cent. Oons ! five and twenty per cent. One would think he was Chancellor to the Exchequer of King Cambyses, for this is talking “in his vein.”

¶ On looking over the MS. of Ariosto to-day, I found at the bottom of the page after the last stanza of Canto 44, Orlando Furioso, ending with the line :—

“ Mi serbo a farri udir ne l'altro Canto.”

the follow[ing] autograph in pencil of Alfieri's,

“ Vittorio Alfieri vide e venero,”
8 Giugno, 1783.

The librarian told me that Alfieri wrote this marginal note by permission of the Superiors, and that he himself had seen Alfieri crying for hours over the MS. I asked the librarian about the Tasso letters, and he gave me an account, but as he did not recollect me I did not betray myself nor my acquaintance with *you*—the English milord, as he qualified you, who had taken, and since stampatoed the copies of the Epic makers' washing-list.

I have been interrupted since I began this letter by a visit from the Gonfaloniere of this city, Count Mosti, to whom I had an introductory letter. He seems an agreeable young man, well-bred, travelled, and well-disposed to travellers; has been in England, and seen Ireland, and the Tower of London, and the inside of

Windsor Castle, which *I* have never seen ; but he has never seen *Rome*, nor the inside (nor out) of St. Peter's, which *I have* seen, and never went into Tasso's cell till the other day when the emperor came here.

It is midnight, and I am a bed-going ; to-morrow evening I am to go to Count Mosti's. I might have gone to a conversazione this evening, but preferred finishing my letter to you, which is a conversation much more agreeable, because one can't have an answer, at least for some time.

" You are a wag, Sam, but I don't understand your jokes."

Yours, B.

RAVENNA, June 26th, 1819.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I have been absent from Venice since the first of the month. By the return of my courier to-day (whom I had sent to Venice for some Peruvian bark of mine for the Countess Guiccioli, who still continues very weak from her miscarriage) I expected some English letters, but not one from anybody ! I wrote to you also from Ferrara.

To my great surprise, we hear that you have been challenged by Antient Pistol—Major Cartwright¹—this seems to me mere midsummer madness. What had you to do with those blackguard Reformers, who made you defy, and leave the Whigs, and make you lose your election, and then call you out as a reward for your trouble ? This is the damnedest piece of impudence I ever heard of—sunburn me if it is not ! I am and have been for *reform* always, but not for the *reformers*. I saw enough of them at the Hampden Club ; Burdett is the only one of them in whose

¹ Major John Cartwright (1740–1824), in his eightieth year, challenged Hobhouse to a duel, believing that the latter had not shown him proper respect. An explanation, however, took place highly creditable to the good feeling and candour of Hobhouse, and a friendly acquaintance afterwards subsisted between them. See *Life and Correspondence of Major Cartwright*, by Miss F. D. Cartwright, ii. 161.

company a gentleman would be seen, unless at a public meeting, or in a public-house.

"I shall have to bail my old friend out of the round-house." "What a coalition!"¹ as "Davy" said of Johnson and Beauclerk. You were the founder of the Whig Club at Cambridge, if my memory serve me rightly.

Of my own matters I know not what to say. Nor you, nor Dougal K., nor Mr. Murray, have honoured me with further intelligence of "the *pomes*," and what I was anxious about—the copyright of Juan, none of you say a word, although I repeated my request at least twenty times by letter.

If Mr. Murray plays me those kind of tricks he will run himself into a puddle.

On the end of this moon or the beginning of next, half a year's *fee* from the funds becomes due, to the remittance of which, and also the sum for the copy of D. J., I look forward as the conscription of the ensuing year, but there was no reason why the Juan part should not have been done long ago. You see I am not pleased with Albemarle Street.

I sent you the proofs received back, with such alterations as were suitable to my own notions.

The weather is hot, but in the evening I take a ride or a drive to the Pineta—the scene of Boccaccio's tale—and Dryden's fable.

Believe me yours ever truly, B.

RAVENNA, July 30th, 1819.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Your last letter was of the beginning of June. How is it with you?—are you slain by Major Cartwright? or ill of a quinsey? or are you writing a pamphlet in rejoinder to Erskine? I understand that a tailor and you are amongst the most strenuous writers in favour of the *measures* taken by the reformers. I sometimes get a glimpse of your speeches with the names of the tavern and company, in a stray

¹ David Garrick.

newspaper, “Galignani,” or the “Lugano Gazette”; there is Mr. *Bicker*-stith, the man-midwife, and several other worthies of the like calibre; “there never was a set of more amicable officers,” as Major Sturgeon says. Pray let me hear how you go on.

My sister writes to me that “Scrope looks ill and out of spirits,” and has not his wonted air of prosperity, and that she fears his pursuits have not had all their former success. Is it even so? I suppose there is no knowing, and that the only way in which his friends will be apprized will be by some confounded thing or other happening to him. He has not written to me since the winter, in last year’s last month. What is he about?

The Dougal Creature has written to mention the pact with Murray; if *it* (*i.e.*, D. J.) fails, the sum is too much; if it succeeds, it is too little by five hundred guineas in coin or ingots. Donny Johnny will either succeed greatly, or tumble flatly; there will be no medium—at least I think not.

Galignani announces “Mazeppa” as stamped,¹ but I know nothing, and hear nothing of it, nor of “Juan”; what is become of the “Ode to Venice”?

I am endeavouring here to get a copy of Benevento da Imola’s Latin commentary on Dante, never yet stamped,¹ quite “inedita.” They promise it me.

I have been swimming in the Adriatic, and cantering through Boccaccio’s Pinery; it is a fine forest, “so full of pastime and prodigality,” and I have persuaded my contessa to put a side-saddle upon a pony of her sposo’s, and we ride together—she in a hat shaped like Punch’s and the merry Mrs. Ford’s of Windsor, and a sky-blue tiffany riding-habit, like the ghost of Prologue’s grandmother.

I bought an English horse of Capt. Fyler some time ago (which, with my others, is here), and he is a famous leaper, and my amusement has been to make her groom on a huge coach-horse, follow me over certain

¹ *I.e.* printed, *stampato*.

ditches and drain-lets, an operation in which he is considerably incommoded by a pair of jack-boots, as well as by the novelty of the undertaking.

You would like the forest ; it reaches from here to Rimini.

I have been here these two months, and hitherto all hath *gone on well*, with the usual *excerpta* of some “gelosie,” which are the fault of the climate, and of the conjunction of two such capricious people as the Guiccioli and the Inglese, but here hath been no stabbing nor drugging of possets. The last person assassinated here was the Commissary of Police, three months ago ; they *kilt* him from an alley one evening, but he is recovering from the slugs with which they sprinkled him, from an “Archibugia” that shot him round a corner, like the Irishman’s gun. He and Manzoni, who was stabbed dead going to the theatre at Forli, not long before, are the only recent instances.

But it is the custom of the country, and not much worse than duelling, where one undertakes, at a certain personal risk of a more open nature, to get rid of a disagreeable person, who is injurious or inconvenient, and if such people become insupportable, what is to be done ? It is give and take, like everything else—you run the same risk, and they run the same risk ; it has the same object with duelling, but adopts a different means.

As to the trash about *honour*, that is all stuff ; a man offends, you want to kill him, this is amiable and natural, but *how* ? The natural mode is obvious, but the artificial varies according to education.

I am taking the generous side of the question, seeing I am much more exposed here to become the patient than the agent of such an experiment. I know but one man whom I should be tempted to put to rest, and he is not an Italian nor in Italy, therefore I trust that he won’t pass through Romagna during my sojourn, because ‘gin he did, there is no saying what the fashionable facilities might induce a vindictive gentleman to meditate ; besides, there are injuries where the balance

is so greatly against the offender, that you are not to risk life against his (excepting always the law, which is originally a convention), but to trample as [you] would on any other venomous animal.

To return to Dante (where you will find a pretty eulogy on revenge) : his tomb is within fifty yards of my "locanda," the effigy and tombstone well preserved, but the outside is a mere modern cupola.

The house flanking this house, but divided by a street, is said to have been inhabited by him, but that is mere *say-so*, as far as I can make out ; it is old enough to have been inhabited by Honorius, for that matter.

The Polentani, his patrons, are buried in a church behind his grave, but there are no tidings nor tradition of Francesca, here or at Rimini, except the mere fact, which, to be sure, is a thumper, as they were actually killed in it.

Hunt made a devil of a mistake about—

"Old Ravenna's clear shewn towers and bay."

There has been no bay nor sea within five miles since long before the time of the Exarchs, and as to "*clear shewn*," the town lies so low that you must be close upon it before it is seen at all, and then there is no comprehensive view unless you climb the steeple.

I was introduced to the Cardinal Legate, a fine old boy, and I might have known all the world, but I prefer a private life, and have lived almost entirely with my paramour, her husband, *his* son by a former marriage, and her father, with her confidante, "in white linen," a very pretty woman, noble also as her friend, called Gertrude Vicari, who has, however, a jealous husband, "a strange Centaur," as Gibbon calls a philosophical theologian. But he is a profane historian.

I also fell in love with a promised bride, named Ursula—something, one of the prettiest creatures I ever saw ; but her barbarous mother, suspecting her of smiling from a window upon me, has watched her ever since, and she won't be married till September so there be no hopes ; however, I am trying my best with a priest

(*not to marry me, you may believe*) and others to bring about some-at.

A precious epistle of gossip this is. But these are all I can say of “fatti miei.”

Canova is now in the Austrian states.

Ever, etc., very truly yours, B.

P.S. *July 31st.*—An old woman at Rome, reading Boccaccio, exclaimed, “I wish to God that this was saying one’s prayers.”

RAVENNA, *August 4th, 1819.*

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I have received yours of the 15th of July, by which I perceive that Juan is before the public ; and at the same time arrived an epistle from Murray of the 16th, in which he seems in a state of perturbation ; and he had by his own account taken refuge at Wimbledon from the torrent which was in all its foam against “his little bark” and the larger vessel also. To be sure, *his* (Murray’s) is no *steamboat*: it won’t work against the stream.

Your next letters will probably tell me that the “*pome*” has gone to the devil—in imitation of the last scene of the pantomime of the same name. That can’t be holpen, and was to be expected, and had been prophesied by all in the secret, and anticipated by me. I have had my own way in spite of everybody, and am satisfied.

I am surprised and pleased with the news of Dougal’s election,¹ and should have had no objection to some of that same “*turtle*” swallowed on his inauguration, together with the cold punch annexed. I am glad that “*us youth*” have made our due noise in the world ; you and the Dougal have turned out very promising politicians in the honesty line, as well as orators. William Bankes hath made a stupendous traveller. Michael Bruce, too, is a fine fellow, and then there is the “*Poeshie du Roi vot’ maître*”; in short, we are a fine batch, including Scrope, the most celebrated of

¹ He had been elected M.P. for Bishop’s Castle, in Shropshire.

the six in his line, in which I hope he flourishes, but of him you have not reported progress.

I wrote to you last week, and will continue, now I am in the humour.

Your reception at the theatre must have been gratifying, particularly as it was the consequence and not the contrast of the "self-approving hour."

BOLOGNA, August 20th, 1819.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I have not lately had of your news, and shall not reproach you because I think that if you had good to send me, you would be the first.

I wrote to you twice or thrice from Ravenna, and now I am at Bologna. Address to me, however, at Venice.

My time has been passed viciously and agreeably; at thirty-one so few years, months, days remain, that "Carpe diem" is not enough. I have been obliged to crop even the seconds, for who can trust *to-morrow*? —*to-morrow* quotha? *to-hour*, *to-minute*. I can not repent me (I try very often) so much of anything I have done, as of anything I have left undone. Alas! I have been but idle, and have the prospect of an early decay, without having seized every available instant of our pleasurable years.

This is a bitter thought, and it will be difficult for me ever to recover the despondency into which this idea naturally throws one.

Philosophy would be in vain—let us try action.

In England I see and read of reform, "and there never were such troublesome times, especially for *constables*"; they have wafered Mr. Birch of Stockport. There is much of Hunt and Harrison, and Sir Charles (Linsey) Woolsey but we hear nothing of you and Burdett?

The "Venerable Cartwright," too—why did you not shorten that fellow's longevity? I do assure you (though that lust for duelling of which you used to accuse me in the Stevens's Coffee-house has long subsided into a moderate desire of killing one's more

personal enemies) that I would have Mantoned old Cartwright most readily. I have no notion of an old fool like that drivelling defiance, and coughing a challenge at his youngers and his betters. “*Solder him up,*” as Francis said of his defunct wife.

And now what do you think of doing ? I have two notions : one to visit England in the spring, the other to go to South America. Europe is grown decrepit ; besides, it is all the same thing over again ; those fellows are fresh as their world, and fierce as their earthquakes.

Besides, I am enamoured of General Paer, who has proved that my grandfather spoke truth about the Patagonians, with his gigantic cavalry.

Would that the Dougal of Bishop’s Castle would find a purchaser for Rochdale.

I would embark (with Fletcher as a breeding beast of burthen) and possess myself of the pinnacle of the Andes, or a spacious plain of unbounded extent in an eligible earthquake situation.

Will my wife always live ? will her mother never die ? is her father immortal ? What are you about ? married and settled in the country, I suppose by your silence.

Yours, B.

P.S. I hear nothing of Don Juan but in two letters from Murray ; the first very tremulous, the second in better spirits.

Of the fate of the “pome” I am quite uncertain, and do not anticipate much brilliancy from your silence. But I do not care. I am as sure as the Archbishop of Grenada that I never wrote better, and I wish you all better taste, but will not send you any pistoles.¹

BOLOGNA, August 23rd, 1819.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I have received a letter from Murray containing the “British Review’s” eleventh

¹ Lord Beaconsfield, speaking on 16 July 1875, at the inauguration of the National Byron Memorial, said that *Don Juan* “will remain, as it is now recognized, an unexampled picture of human nature, and the triumph of the English tongue.”

article. Had you any conception of a man's tumbling into such a trap as Roberts has done? Why it is precisely what he was wished to do.

I have enclosed an epistle for publication with a queer signature (to Murray, who should keep the anonymous still about D. Juan) in answer to Roberts, which pray approve if you can.¹ It is written in an evening and morning in haste, with ill-health and worse nerves. I am so bilious, that I nearly lose my head, and so nervous that I cry for nothing; at least to-day I burst into tears, all alone by myself, over a cistern of gold-fishes, which are not pathetic animals.

I can assure you it is not Mr. Roberts, or any of his crew that can affect me; but I have been excited and agitated, and exhausted mentally and bodily all this summer, till I sometimes begin to think not only “that I shall die at top first,” but that the moment is not very remote. I have had no particular cause of griefs, except the usual accompaniments of all unlawful passions.

I have to do with a woman rendered perfectly disinterested by her situation in life, and young and amiable and pretty; in short as good, and at least as attentive as anything of the sex can be, with all the advantages and disadvantages of being scarcely twenty years old, and only two out of her Romagnuolo convent at Faenza.

But I feel—and I feel it bitterly—that a man should not consume his life at the side and on the bosom of a woman, and a stranger; that even the recompense, and it is much, is not enough, and that this Cicisbean existence is to be condemned.

But I have neither the strength of mind to break my chain, nor the insensibility which would deaden its weight. I cannot tell what will become of me—to leave, or to be left would at present drive me quite out of my senses; and yet to what have I conducted myself?

¹ A letter to the Editor of *The British Review*, by Wortley Clutterbuck. See *Letters and Journals*, iv. 347.

I have, luckily, or unluckily, no ambition left ; it would be better if I had, it would at least awake me ; whereas at present I merely start in my sleep.

I think I wrote to you last week, but really (like Lord Grizzle) cannot positively tell.

Why don't you write ? pray do—never mind “*Don Juan*,” let him tumble—and let me too—like Jack and Gill.

Write, and believe me—as long as I can keep my sanity, ever yours most truly and affect^{ly}, B.

A fragment numbered 2, and addressed to Hon. D. Kd., London post-mark, September 7th, 1819, therefore presumably written about August 27.

(Post-mark) BOLOGNA. *Circa August 27th, 1819.*

Do let me know what there will be likely to be done, that one may lend a hand. A revolutionary commission into Leicestershire would just suit me ; the patriots should have a faithful account of Lady Noel's cattle, corn, and coach-horses, etc., etc., etc. What colour is our cockade to be, and our uniform ?

If mine be a “Charge of horse,” I shall rub up my broadsword exercise, in which I was really a proficient. Ask *old Angelo* if I did not cut his arms and elbows about rarely, during our practice in Albany ?

Pray write and address to Venice.

Byron to Kinnaird

VENICE, October 26th, 1819.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—My late expenditure has arisen from living at a distance from Venice, and being obliged to keep up two establishments, from frequent journeys, and buying some furniture and books as well as a horse or two ; and not from any renewal of the EPICUREAN system as you suspect.

I have been faithful to my honest liaison with Countess Guiccioli, and I can assure you that *She* has never cost me, directly or indirectly, a sixpence.

Indeed the circumstances of herself and family render this no merit.

I never offered her but one present—a broach of brilliants—and she sent it back to me with her *own hair* in it, and a note to say that she was not in the habit of receiving presents of that value, but hoped that I would not consider her sending it back as an affront, nor the value diminished by the enclosure.

Damn your delicacy. It is a low commercial quality, and very unworthy a man who prefixes “honourable” to his nomenclature. If you say that I must sign the bonds, I suppose that I must, but it is very iniquitous to make me pay my debts ; you have no idea of the pain it gives one.

Pray do three things. Get my property out of the funds, get me some more information from Perry about South America, and thirdly ask Lady Noel not to live so very long.

As to “Don Juan”¹ confess, confess, you dog, and be candid, that it is the sublime of *that there* sort of writing. I have written about a hundred stanzas of a Third Canto, but it is damned modest ; the outcry has frightened me. I had such projects for the Don, but the benefit of my experiences must now be lost to despairing posterity.

After all, what stuff this outcry is. Lalla Rookh and Little are more dangerous than any burlesque poem can be.

Moore has been here ; we got tipsy together, and were very amicable. He is gone on to Rome. I put my life (in MS.) into his hands (*not* for publication). You, or anybody else, may see it at his return. It only comes up to 1816.

He is a noble fellow, and looks quite fresh and poetical, nine years (the age of a poem’s education) my senior. He looks younger—this comes of marriage, and being settled in the country.

¹ Hobhouse writes in his Diary, 1 May : “*Don Juan* going through the press. I do not think it so bad or so good as I did, not so indecent or so clever.”

I want to go to South America. I have written to Hobhouse all about it.

I wrote to my wife three months ago, under care to Murray. Has she got the letter, or is the letter got into "Blackwood's Magazine"?

You ask after my Christmas pye. Remit it anyhow, *Circulars* are the best. You are right about *income*. I must have it all. How the devil do I know that I may live a year, or a month?

I wish I knew, that I might regulate my spending in more ways than one. As it is, one always thinks that there is but a span. A man may as well break, or be damned for a large sum as a small one. I should be loth to pay the devil, or any other creditor more than sixpence in the pound.

Yours, B.

VENICE, November 16th, 1819.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—A few weeks ago I wrote to you to explain in answer to your letter, that my expenditure at Bologna, &c., had arisen from various journeys, and some purchases of horses and furniture, as well as the keeping up two establishments for the time being, one at Venice, and the other in Romagna, besides living at Hotels.

In September, Countess Guiccioli—my sovereign—was ordered to Venice for her health, to consult Dr. Aglietti again. Her husband went to Ravenna on business. We travelled together, and lived together in the country till her husband's arrival in November. On the road, by the way, we were very near going off together from Padua, for France and America, but as I had more prudence, and more experience, and know that the time would come when both might repent, I paused, and prevailed on her to pause also.

At last the Cavalier Conte Guiccioli came to Venice, where he found his wife considerably improved in health, but hating him so cordially, that they quarrelled violently. He had said nothing before, but at last, on finding this to be the case, he gave her the alterna-

tive, *him*, or *me*. She decided instantly for *me*, not being allowed to have both, and the lover generally having the preference. But he had also given her a paper of rules to which he wished her to assent, all of them establishing his authority.

Her friends and relatives of Ravenna were, in the meantime, in despair, as an *elopement* in Italy is the devil ; worse even than with *us*, because it is *supererogation*, and shows a headlong character. What could I do ? On one hand, to sacrifice a woman whom I loved, for life ; leaving her destitute and divided from all ties in case of my death ; on the other hand to give up an “*amicizia*” which had been my pleasure, my pride, and my passion.

At twenty I should have taken her away, at thirty, with the experience of *ten such years* ! I sacrificed myself only ; and counselled, and persuaded her with the greatest difficulty, to return with her husband to Ravenna, not absolutely denying that I might come there again ; else she refused to go.

But I shall quit Italy. I have done my duty, but the country has become sad to me ; I feel alone in it ; and as I left England on account of my own wife, I now quit Italy for the wife of another.

I shall make my way to Calais, as I can without going through Paris. I do not come to England for pleasure, but I know not where to go, unless to America. Tell *Scrope Davies*, I must see *him* immediately. I shall write to him from Calais, perhaps, to join me there (he will pardon me the trouble), as there is a matter which has been upon my mind these three years (ever since I knew it), that I must settle immediately on my arrival.¹ He will understand me, and so perhaps may you ; but you are both too much men of honour (as well as Hobhouse, from whom I have no secrets), to let it go further.

I have been very unwell with an intermittent fever, which is leaving, but it has not yet quite left me ; I

¹ His intention to settle with Brougham. See Byron's letter to Hobhouse, 21 Sept. 1820.

trust that it will, as it is better, or rather I am better of it.

I return to England with a heavier heart than when I left it ; with no prospects of pleasure, or comfort, and indifferent to everything but that which it is my duty to do, and which I could wish done with all proper speed.

I shall bring my little daughter Allegra with me, but I know not where to go. I have nobody to receive me, but my sister ; and I must conform to my circumstances and live accordingly—that is meanly in London, and with difficulty, on that which affords splendour and ease in Italy. But I hope to get out to America, if I don't take a much longer voyage. I should prefer Spanish America.

Pray make my remembrances to all our friends, and believe me,

Yours ever and truly, B.

Byron to Hobhouse

VENICE, November 20th, 1819.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—A few days ago I wrote to Douglas K. to apprise him and my friends of my probable arrival near England in no very long period. The cause I have detailed at some length in my letter to Douglas.

Il Conte Guiccioli, at length discovering that his lady was estranged from him, gave us (like Mr. Croaker in the “Good-natured Man”) “a mutual choice,” that is the husband or the lover—him or me—one, but not both. The lady was for leaving him, and eloping or separating ; and so should I, had I been twenty, instead of thirty and one years of age, for I loved her ; but I knew the event would for her be irreparable, and that all her family—her sisters particularly and father —would be plunged into despair for the reputation of the rest of the girls ; so I prevailed on her, with great difficulty, to return to Ravenna with her husband, who promised forgetfulness, if she would give me up.

He actually came to *me*, crying about it, and I told him, “if you abandon your wife I will take her undoubtedly; it is my duty, it is also my inclination in case of such extremity; but if, as you say, you are really disposed to live with, and like her as before, I will not only not carry further disturbance into your family, but even repass the Alps; for I have no hesitation in saying that Italy will be now to me insupportable.”

After ten days of such things during which I had (and have still) the tertian ague, she agreed to go back with him; but I feel so wretched and low, and lonely, that I will leave the country, reluctantly indeed, but I will do it; for, otherwise, if I formed a new *liaison* she would cut the figure of a woman *planted*, and I never will willingly hurt her self-love.

I can have no other motive, for *here nobody fights*, and as to assassination, I have risked it many a good time for her at Ravenna, and should hardly shrink now. I will say no more, except that it has been as bitter a cut-up for me as that of leaving England.

Guiccioli's lord intercepted a letter of her father, Count Ruggiero Gamba Ghiselli (there is the name at length), giving her some prudent advice to smooth the husband; and this blew up the whole affair, besides some awkward evidence about sleeping together, and doors locked—which like a goose had been locked, and then afterwards forgotten to be re-opened; so that he knocked his horns against the doors of his own drawing-room.

There is packing and preparation going on, and I mean to plod through the Tyrol with my little “*shild*” Allegrina, who however is not very well, and half the house have brought the tertian from the Mira—it made me delirious during one attack.

A German of the name of Simon—with your brother's recommendation from Trieste, has asked me to take him to England, and I will do so with the permission of God. William Bankes is at Trieste, and has written to me.

November 21st.

I have a little plague, and some little trouble with the present state of my household, of whom *five*, including myself, have the intermittent fever, more or less.

Dr. Aglietti has this moment informed me that Allegra has the "*doppia terzana*," a febrile doubleton, which it seems renders my departure from hence quite uncertain (as I will not and cannot go without her). It means that the poor child has the fever *daily*, and her nurse has it, besides a cameriere and a barcarôlo, my own has diminished. At first it was violent to a degree of temporary delirium, but has subsided in the third week to a slight attack, but has left my mind very weak and unintellectual.

All these things put together, prevent me from entering upon any of my purposes; and indeed make me postpone, from day to day, my departure; for the doctor will say nothing decided of my daughter, and I dare not remove till her journey is pronounced innocent.

I had things to say to Scrope. There were things to say to you, and to Douglas—but—alas! here I am in a gloomy Venetian palace, never *more* alone than when alone,—unhappy in the retrospect, and at least as much so in the prospect; and at the moment when I trusted to set out—taken aback by this indisposition of my child, which, however, thank God, as far as I can learn, is not dangerous; but very tiresome and tedious.

At present all my plans of revenge first, and emigration afterwards, in case of arriving and surviving near your coasts, are lulled upon the feverish pillow of a sick infant.

I began this letter yesterday; and within the twenty-four hours only was I made aware of the full extent of Allegra's malady. But my former letter to Kinnaird is neutralized by this event, except in case of her speedy recovery. In Italy I will not remain a moment longer than enables me to quit it.

I mean, or meant to go by the Tyrol, &c. &c. &c., and to write to you on my arrival at Calais.

You have never answered my letter of South American *enquiries*. I must go there, or to the Cape, anything but stay near England ; that is to say if I accomplish what I ought to do, in approaching it near enough, and if I do not, I shall have no further need to accomplish anything.

I allude to mere private business, but have no leisure, or rather too much, and too few spirits to explain further at present.

Yours ever and truly, B.

Byron to Kinnaird

VENICE, December 10th, 1819.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—The winter has set in hard, and my daughter not being well re-established, I have put off my intended voyage till the spring, or perhaps to the Greek Calends.

You can therefore write to me, *addressed to this place*, as usual (though I do not intend to remain *in it*), telling me of the Irish mortgage, and remitting the dividends of January when you please.

Murray, it seems, wishes to try a question of copyright of *Don Juan*, and bring *in my name* ; I would rather pay him back the money, as he will be sure to lose. The Chancellor would decide against him, as he decided on *Wat Tyler*, as the cry is at present up with that fool *Carlile*,¹ and his trash in such a manner, that they would re-crucify Christ himself, if he reappeared in his old humble accoutrements, and had only his own word for his credentials.

Inform H[obhouse] and all friends, as well as my sister, of this variation in my compass, which need surprise nobody.

¹ Richard Carlile (1790–1843), a disciple of Thomas Paine. Issued Paine's works, and was imprisoned at Dorchester for six years, 1819–1825. While in prison he issued a journal entitled *The Republican*.

I have finished a third canto of *Don Juan*, very *decent*, but dull—damned dull ; and until I hear from you, I shall hardly venture him to sea again. I have read a collection of reviews which Murray sent me ; there hath been “a cry of women,” and of old women, it would seem, but we shall see. Murray should recollect one thing—if he tries his copy question, and loses it on the ground of the work being called licentious or irreligious, I lose all right, legal and paternal, to the guardianship of my legitimate daughter Ada. I would rather refund his purchase, as is fair. So pray propose, and let me know something about this.

I do not mean to stay at Venice. I shall go again to Ravenna ; anything better than England. It is better to be with a woman whom I love, at the risk of assassination, than in a country where I neither like, nor am liked, and where my first duty and intention is to cut the throat of a scoundrel.

But for all that, we shall or may meet in the spring.
Pray write.

Yours, B.

Address to Venice.

CHAPTER X

RAVENNA

(1820)

LORD BYRON spent the year 1820 mainly at Ravenna with Countess Guiccioli, a state of affairs which was submitted to the adjudication of the Pope.¹

Byron contemplates coming to England for various reasons: to help Queen Caroline in her Trial, if he can do so; to settle his own affairs; and to chastise Brougham, whose part in the Separation he never forgave.

In 1820 the European settlement arrived at the Congress of Vienna was rapidly breaking up. The first revolution occurred in Spain, where the weak and reactionary Ferdinand VII was forced to give way. This shock soon communicated itself to Italy, which had been divided up into a number of semi-independent principalities, mainly under the oppressive domination of Austria. The first of these to revolt was Naples, which, like Spain, had been placed under an incompetent Bourbon, Ferdinand I. The whole country was honeycombed by a system of government spies and secret societies, the chief of the latter being the Carbonari. The Neapolitan revolt was crushed by Austria with trifling resistance, and in October Metternich convoked a Congress at Troppau to deal with the situation. Austria, Prussia, and Russia were for repression, while England made a formal protest,

¹ Letter of 6 July.

but was not prepared to go to war in such a cause. These events are frequently referred to in the correspondence of this year. The chief writings of this year were the continuation of *Don Juan*, *Morgante Maggiore*, *The Prophecy of Dante*, the translation of *Francesca of Rimini*, *Marino Faliero*, and *Observations in an Article in Blackwood's Magazine*, in which article, ostensibly a review of *Don Juan*, he was accused of showing himself “no longer a human being, but a cool, unconcerned fiend.”

Byron to Hobhouse

RAVENNA, March 3rd, 1820.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I have paused thus long in replying to your letter not knowing well in what terms to write ; because though I approve of the object, yet, with the exception of Burdett and Doug. K. and one or two others, I dislike the companions of your labours as much as the place to which they have brought you.

I perceive by the papers that “ould Apias Kerkus” has not extricated you from the “puddle” into which your wit hath brought you. However, if this be but a prologue to a seat for Westminster I shall less regret your previous ordeal ; but I am glad that I did not come to England, for it would not have pleased me to find on my own return from transportation my best friends in Newgate.¹ “Did I ever—no I never,”—but I will say no more, all reflections being quite *Nugatory* on the occasion, still I admire your gallantry, and think you could not do otherwise, *having* written the pamphlet, but “*why bitch Mr. Wild ?*” why write it ? why lend yourself to Hunt and Cobbett, and the bones of Tom Paine ? “Death and fiends !” You used to be thought a prudent man, at least by me, whom you

¹ Hobhouse was released from Newgate on 28 Feb. after eleven weeks of imprisonment, during which he was again chosen as candidate for Westminster. See *Recollections of a Long Life*, ii. 118.

favoured with so much good counsel ; but methinks you are waxed somewhat rash, at least in politics. However, the king is dead, so get out of Mr. Burn's apartments, and get into the House of Commons ; and then abuse it as much as you please, and I'll come over and hear you. Seriously ; I did not " laugh " as you supposed I would ; no more did Fletcher ; but we looked both as grave as if we had got to have been your bail, particularly that learned person who pounced upon the event in the course of spelling the *Lugano Gazette*.

So Scrope is gone—*down-diddled*¹—as Doug. K. writes it, the said Doug. being like the man who, when he lost a friend, went to the Saint James' Coffee House and took a new one ; but to you and me the loss of Scrope is irreparable ; we could have better spared not only a " better man," but the " best of men." Dutch beer and shoot himself the first foggy morning. Brummell at Calais ; Scrope at Bruges, Buonaparte at St. Helena, you in your new apartments,² and I at Ravenna, only think ! so many great men ! There has been nothing like it since Themistocles at Magnesia, and Marius at Carthage.

But times change, and they are luckiest who get over their first rounds at the beginning of the battle.

The other day, February 25th, we plucked violets by the wayside *here*, at Ravenna ; and now, March 3rd, it is snowing for all the world as it may do in Cateaton St.

We have nothing new here but the Cardinal from Imola and the news of the berri-cide in France by a sadler ; I suppose the Duke had not paid his bill.³

I shall let " dearest duck " waddle alone at the Coronation ; a ceremony which I should like to see, and have a right to act Punch in ; but the crown itself would not bribe me to return to England, unless

¹ He was ruined by gambling, and escaped to the Continent.

² i.e. Newgate.

³ The assassination of the Duc de Berri, 13 Feb. 1820.

⁴ Lady Byron.

business or actual urgency required it. I was very near coming, but that was because I had been very much “agitato” with some circumstances of a domestic description, here in Italy, and not from any love of the tight little Island.

Tell Doug. K. that I answered his last letter long ago, and enclosed in the letter an order peremptory to Spooney, to make me an Irish Absentee, according to Doug.’s own directions.

I like the security in Dublin houses, “an empty house on Ormond Quay,” but pray, are they insured in case of conflagration? Deliver me that, and let us be guaranteed, otherwise what becomes of my fee?

My Clytemnestra stipulated for the security of her jointure; it was delicately done, considering that the poor woman will only have ten thousand a year, more or less, for life, on the death of her mother.

I sent Murray two more cantos of Donny Johnny, but they are only to reckon as *one* in arithmetic, because they are but one long one, cut into *two*, whilk was expedient on account of tedium. So don’t let him be charged for these two but as one. I sent him also a translation, close and rugged, of the first canto of the Morgante Maggiore, to be published with the original text, side by side, “cheek by jowl gome,” on account of the superlative merits of both. All these are to be corrected by you by way of solace during your probation.

William Bankes came to see me twice, once at Venice and he since came a second time from Bologna to Ravenna on purpose, so I took him to a Ball here, and presented him to all the Ostrogothic Nobility, and to the Dama whom I serve. I have settled into regular *serventismo*, and find it the happiest state of all, always excepting scarmentado’s. I double a shawl with considerable alacrity; but have not yet arrived at the perfection of putting it on the right way; and I hand in and out, and know my post in a conversazione, and theatre; and play at cards as well as a man can do who of all the Italian pack can only distinguish

" Asso " and " Re," the rest for me are hieroglyphics. Luckily the play is limited to " Papetti," that is pieces of four Pauls, somewhere in, or about two shillings.

I am in favour and respect with the Cardinal, and Vicelegato, and in decent intercourse with the Gonfaloniere and all the Nobilità of the middle ages. Nobody has been stabbed this winter, and few new liaisons formed.

RAVENNA, *March 29th, 1820.*

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I congratulate you on your change of residence, which, I perceive by the papers, took place on the dissolution of king and parliament.

The other day I sent (through Murray) a song for you—you dog—to pay you off for them there verses which you compounded in April 1816.

" No more shall Mr. Murray
Pace Piccadilly in a hurry,
Nor Holmes with not a few grimaces
Beg a few pounds for a few faces,
Nor Douglas—"

but I won't go on, though you deserve it, but you see I forget nothing—but good.

I suppose I shall soon see your speeches again, and your determination " not to be saddled with wooden shoes as the Gazetteer says," but do pray get into Parliament, and out of the company of all these fellows, except Burdett and Douglas Kinnaird, and don't be so very violent. I doubt that Thistlewood will be a great help to the ministers in all the elections, but especially in the Westminster.¹

What a set of desperate fools these Utican conspirators seem to have been. As if in London, after the disarming acts, or indeed at any time, a secret

¹ Thistlewood was the ringleader in the Cato Street conspiracy. His plan was to assassinate the Ministers while at dinner at Lord Harrowby's on 23 Feb. 1820. Thistlewood was captured in bed on 28 Feb. and was hanged on 1 May 1820.

could have been kept among thirty or forty. And if they had killed poor Harrowby—in whose house I have been five hundred times, at dinners and parties ; his wife is one of “the Exquisites”—and t’other fellows, what end would it have answered ?

“They understand these things better in France,”¹ as Yorick says, but really, if these sort of awkward butchers are to get the upper hand, *I* for one will declare *off*. I have always been (*before* you were, as you well know) a well-wisher to, and voter for reform in parliament ; but “such fellows as these, who will never go to the gallows with any credit,” such infamous scoundrels as Hunt² and Cobbett, in short, the whole gang (always excepting you, B. and D.) disgust, and make one doubt of the virtue of any principle or politics which can be embraced by similar ragamuffins.

I know that revolutions are not to be made with rose water, but though some blood may, and must be shed on such occasions, there is no reason it should be *clotted* ; in short, the Radicals seem to be no better than Jack Cade or Wat Tyler, and to be dealt with accordingly.

I perceive you talk *Tacitus* to them sometimes ; what do they make of it ? It is a great comfort, however, to see you termed “*young Mr. Hobhouse*,” at least to me who am a year and a half younger, and had given up for these two years all further idea of being

“Gentle and juvenile, curly and gay,
In the manner of Ackermann’s dresses for May.”

And now, my man—my parliament man I hope—what is become of Scrope ? Is he at Bruges ? or have you gone to “the St. James’s coffee-house to take another ?”

¹ “They order,” said I, “this matter better in France.” Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey*.

² “Orator Hunt,” who convoked the Reform meeting in St. Peter’s Fields, Manchester, when several persons were killed by the yeomanry. Hunt was sentenced to two years’ imprisonment in connexion with it. He became Member for Preston in 1830, and died five years later.

You will have been sadly plagued by this time with some new packets of poesy and prose for the press ; but Murray was so pressing and in such a hurry for something for the *Season*, that I e'en sent him a cargo ; otherwise I had got sulky about Juan, and did not mean to print any more, at least “ *before term ends.* ”

You will see that I have taken up the *Pope*¹ question (in prose) with a high hand, and *you* (when you can spare yourself from *Party* to Mankind) must help me. You know how often, under the Mira elms, and by the Adriatic on the Lido, we have discussed that question, and lamented the villainous cant which at present would deery him. It is my intention to give battle to the blackguards and try if the “ little Nightingale ” can’t be heard again.

But at present you are on the hustings, or in the chair. Success go with you.

Yours, B.

Byron to Kinnaird

RAVENNA, April 6th, 1820.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I have received the enclosed letter from Mr. Hanson, which I confess “ *doth give me pause* ”

Between the devil and deep sea,
Between the Lawyer and Trustee.

I am sadly bested. What *can I decide?*

Or this way, or that way, or which way I will,
Whate’er I decide, *t’other* bride will take ill.

I love six per cent.—if *six* it be (but it seems *six*

¹ See *Some Observations in an Article in Blackwood’s Magazine*, No. xxix, Aug. 1819—*A Letter to I. D’Is:aeli, Esq.*, in which Byron refers to “ my old classical friends who have not enough of Cambridge left in them to think themselves honoured by having had John Dryden as a predecessor in their College, and to recollect that their earliest English poetical pleasures were drawn from ‘ the little nightingale ’ of Twickenham.” Byron’s *First Letter on the Rev. W. L. Bowles’ Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope* is dated 7 Feb. 1821.

means *five* in Ireland¹)—but I can't sell out at such a thundering loss in the funds at present ; and then the *housen maun'* be insured, otherwise the security would be like George Faulkner's burglary—

“ Last night an empty house on Ormond quay.”

In short, I can't consent, and can't dissent—what the devil is to be done ? Do pray decide anything, and I'll agree, if you will but set the example.

But my feelings overpower me.

Yours ever and most truly, BYRON.

P.S. I can't come to England till after the Coronation, because of family matters ; my spouse and I could not march together at it, and I have no great inclination.

RAVENNA, April 14th, 1820.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—The hopes of the termination of this interminable mortgage, and the breaking of my carriage (not the travelling one) by an overturn (I was upset a month ago), have induced me to solace myself with a new one, ordered at Florence (a landau), and to which I have appended a pair of brand new horses, harness, and the like. All this, besides cutting a formidable figure in francs, and in scudi, will look not less repugnant in pounds sterling ; so that you will make a fearful face, as becomes a banker, trustee, and particularly as a friend, who is privileged to look as disagreeable as possible. But then, as a set-off, I have despatched sundry packets of poeshie to Master Murray, of that ilk, cantos of “ Donny Johnny,” and translations from Pulci, and “ Visions of Dante,” and a brief translation from the same, &c.—the which, added to my *fee* from the funds, viz., half my year's income in July, will or ought to bring us right again, to say nothing of a handsome sum in ransom epistles, and circulars, yet itching in my breeches pockets.

It rejoices me to see that Hobhouse is at last an

¹ His trustees advanced £10,000 on mortgage on Lord Blessington's Irish Estates. *Letters and Journals*, v. 33.

M.P.¹; his former fate reminded of the lines on Guy Faux—

“ Guy Faux turpis erat, voluitque cremare Senatum
Ast hoc invento, Ille (the Constable understood) *recepit eum*
(took him up).”

But now, as Garshattachin says, “ I’m glad you’re a Baillie,”² though he passed through a queer sort of a turnpike to his preferment.

Would you go to the house by the true gate,
Much faster than ever Whig Charley went,
Let Parliament send you to Newgate,
And Newgate will send you to Parliament.

Pray are you in Parliament this time? or only as far as Newgate, on your way there? The return, or close of the poll for Bishops Castle is not given in the “ Pas de Calais,” nor in “ Galignani,” so that I am in ignorance of your proper success.

We are in expectation of a *row* here in a short time. The Spanish business has set all Italy a constitutioning, and they won’t get it without some *fechting*, as we Scottish say. Now this being likely, I shall stay to see what turns up, and perhaps take a turn amongst them, instead of coming to hear so much, and to see so little done, as seems to be your Anglo-fashion at present.

Here, you may believe, there will be cutting of thrapples, and something *like* a civil buffetting, if they once begin, and there are all the dispositions. You can have no idea of the ferment in men’s minds, from the Alps to Otranto.

As I have been inoculated among the people rather, within these last four years, if matters wax serious, I should not like to sit twirling my thumbs, but perhaps “ take service,” like Dugald Dalgetty and his horse, on the savage side of the question. But I must say no

¹ He was elected for Westminster on 25 March.

² “ Weel, the devil take the mistake and all that occasioned it,” replied Garshattachin. “ But I am glad ye are a baillie.” *Rob Roy*, chapter xxviii.

more just at present, except desiring you to write now and then, as long as the communications are open.

I desire to be remembered to that Hobhouse—whom I perceive characterized in the “Courier” as a cold-blooded conspirator, full of mischiefs—Guy Faux again—“callidus, a hot-headed fellow; frigidus, a cold, determined villain”—and to all the respectable part of your people, in whose principles, however, I do not fully concur.

Believe me, yours ever, &c., B.

P.S. I enclose to *you* some rhymes of last year, which I have just copied out. I wrote them on passing the Po, in June, 1819—the subject of them being that at Cavanelli sul’ Po, nearer the sea, and I much higher up.¹

I send them to you, instead of to Moray, as a sign of my high displeasure; and so tell him, in future, I shall enclose everything to you, since he neglects to answer by return of post, when I send him nonsense by packets.

As a reward for his rudeness, *bleed* him in the *jugular*, when you treat for the MSS. I have a drama, too, upon the anvil—not for the stage.

Byron to Hobhouse

RAVENNA, April 22nd, 1820.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—By yesterday’s post I had yours of the 31st ulto. The papers told me that you had

¹ This refers to the *Stanzas to the Po*, written on 1 June 1819, when Byron was crossing the Po on his way to Ravenna. Ostensibly, these verses form an apostrophe to the River Po, but in fact the River Trent is in the poet’s mind, and the “Lady of his love” was undoubtedly Mary Chaworth. It appears that the Countess Guiccioli was at that time at Cavanella di Po, about two miles south by west of Loreo, and three and a half miles east of Adria. Cavanella di Po lies about fifteen miles from the sea, so that the line—

“I near thy source, she by the dark blue deep,” must be credited to poetic licence. (See also *Byron : The Last Phase*, pp. 298–303.)

got *out*, and got *in*; I am truly glad of both events, though I could have wished the one had had no connection with the other.

I beg your pardon for confounding you with Hunt and Cobbett, but I thought that the Manchester business¹ had effected a reconciliation, at least you all ('bating Cobbett) attending one meeting soon after it, but I am glad to hear you have nothing to do with those scoundrels. I can understand and enter into the feelings of Mirabeau and La Fayette, but I have no sympathy with Robespierre and Marat, whom I look upon as in no respect worse than those two English ruffians if they once had the power. You will hardly suppose that I should deny to you what I said to another; I did use such an expression on the subject of Bristol Hunt, and I repeat it. I do not think the man who would overthrow all laws should have the benefit of any; he who plays the Tyler, or Cade, might find the Walworth, or Iden; he who enacts the Clodius, the Milo, and what is there in Bristol Hunt and Cobbett *so* honest as the former, or *more* patriotic than the latter? "Arcades ambo," blackguards both. Why, our classical education alone should teach us to trample on such unredeemed dirt as the *dis*-honest bluntness, the ignorant brutality, the unblushing baseness of these two miscreants, and all who believe in them.

I think I have neither been an illiberal man, nor an unsteady man upon politics; but I think also that if the Manchester yeomanry had cut down *Hunt only*, they would have done their duty; as it was they committed murder, both in what they did, and what they did *not* do, in butchering the weak instead of *piercing* the wicked; in assailing the seduced instead of the seducer; in punishing the poor starving populace instead of that pampered and dinnered blackguard, who is only less contemptible than his predecessor, *Orator Henley*, because he is more mischievous.

¹ The so-called "Peterloo Massacre," when Henry Hunt made an inflammatory speech at St. Peter's Fields, Manchester. A riot ensued, the yeomanry were called out, and a few lives were lost.

What I say thus I say as publicly as you please ; if to praise such fellows be the price of popularity, I spit upon it as I would in their faces.

Upon reform you have long known my opinion ; but *radical* is a new word since my time, it was not in the political vocabulary in 1816, when I left England, and I don't know what it means—is it uprooting ?

As to yourself, it is not in the power of political events to change my sentiments. I am rejoiced to see you in Parliament, because I am sure you will make a splendid figure in it, and have fought hard to arrive there, and I esteem and admire Burdett, as you know ; but with these, and half a dozen more exceptions, I protest, not against *reform*, but my most thorough contempt and abhorrence of all that I have seen, read, or heard, of the persons calling themselves *reformers*, *radicals*, and such other names. I should look upon being free with such men as much the same as being in bonds with felons.

I am no enemy to liberty, however, and you will be glad to hear that there is some chance of it in Italy. The Spanish business¹ has set the Italians agog, and if there turns up anything, as is not unlikely, I may perhaps “wink and hold out mine iron” with the rest ; or at any rate be a well-wishing spectator of a push against those rascally Austrians, who have desolated Lombardy, and threaten the rest of the *bel paese*.

I should not like to leave this country in case of a row ; but if nothing occurs, and you come out during the recess in autumn, I might revert with you, though only four years of the usual term of transportation are expired.

I wrote to you last week about my affairs, which are puzzling ; Dougal says the Irish thing is excellent ; Hanson says it is ruinous—decide between them.

I have sent lots of poeshie to Murray, who has not condescended to acknowledge but two, of half a dozen

¹ See *Letters and Journals*, v. 8, 9.

packets ; *bleed him in the jugular*, as they did our char-a-banc driver in the Simmenthal in 1816.

Believe me, yours ever and truly, B.

P.S.—I have written in great haste, and it is bed-time ; my monkey, too, has been playing such tricks about the room as Mr. Hunt at his meetings ; so that I have hardly had time to be common-sensible, but never mind.

Byron to Kinnaird

RAVENNA, April 30th, 1820.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I have to congratulate Hobhouse on his election, but I do not know whether I have yet to pay you the same compliment.¹

I must now trouble you with a small bit of “ booksale and backshop ” business. Jno. Murray was very impatient for some more of Juan, so I sent him *two* Cantos ; that is, *one long* Canto cut into two ; but expressly *stated* and *stipulated* by me to *reckon* (in money matters) *only* as *one*, in fairness to him, as well as from this having been the original form ; in fact, the two are not so long as *one* of those already published, which are both very tedious.

It seems that *one* half of these Cantos do not please the said John and his Synod, and they are *right* ; I *know*, and said to him always, that they were *not* good, but he was very eager, so I sent them. Now I am by no means anxious for the publication, and have written to say so ; I have also sent him various things, verse and prose (the *prose* I *don't* mean in any case to publish just now), so that you may let him off if he likes. I *don't* care about the money, only do you let me know in time, that I may not calculate upon any extra sum beyond the income funds in July next. I had made no bargain with him, leaving all that to you, and he has behaved very fairly, and I wish to do as much by him as I would whether he had or no. If he chooses to decline,

¹ Kinnaird had been elected for Bishop's Castle.

let him, and let the thing rest in abeyance ; I don't want any other publisher nor publication. If he wishes to publish he may, and you may settle as seems fair to both.

I enclose you his letter to me for you to go upon ; you will, I think, agree with him, that the trash is not very brilliant this time ; but I can't alter, I can't cobble ; I have struck out a few stanzas, and that is all I can do, except suppressing the whole new Cantos, to which I have no objection.

News I have none to send, except that we expect a rising in Italy for a Constitution. I sometimes think of going to England after the Coronation, and sometimes not. I have no thoughts, at least no wish, of coming before, and not much after ; but I am very undecided and uncertain, and have quite lost all *local* feeling for England, without having acquired any *local* attachment for any other spot, except in the occasional admiration of fine landscapes, and goodly cities.

It is now turned of four years since I left it, and out of the last eleven I have passed upwards of six years a-gipsying. You tell me nothing of the whereabouts of Scrope, our old crony, nor does Hobhouse ; you worldly gentlemen make excellent friends, however ; you lent him money, and I daresay it was that, more than your memory that he liked ; but he was a fine fellow, and as he never had any of *my* cash to authorise me to forget him, I should be glad to know what hath become of him.

Yours ever very truly, BN.

P.S. I want to ax Hobhouse a question ; in his last letter he denies that any reconciliation has taken place between him and Hunt, and yet I see Hunt at the dinner, and an eulogium from Burdett on the blackguard who called Hobhouse an ape, or a monkey at the last election. I wish to know why he sate down to table with him ? I don't mean that such a fellow could merit a gentlemanly resentment, or give either satisfaction or apology, but why eat in his company ?

About 15 April 1820 Murray received from Byron a ballad, “ My boy Hobby O ! ”¹ poking fun at Hobhouse for his radical associates—Hunt and Co. It was not intended for publication ; but when it got into the newspapers Hobhouse was so much annoyed as to threaten to break off his friendship with Byron. The following letter is an answer to Hobhouse’s remonstrance.

Byron to Hobhouse

RAVENNA, May 11th, 1820.

MY DEAR H[OBHOUSE],—You were not “ *down* ” but 700 ahead in the *poll* when I lampooned you. I had scrawled it before the election began, but waited till you were, or at least appeared, sure (in the *Gazetteer*) before I sent to *you* what would have been a sorry jest had you *failed* ; it would then have been ill-natured ; as it is, it was buffoonery, and this, you know, has been all along our mutual privilege. When I left England *you* made those precious lines on Murray, and Douglas, Kin^d and y^r humble servt., and in 1808 you put me into prose at Brighthelmstone about Jackson, and W. W[ebster], and Debathe, and wrote mock epitaphs upon my poor friend Long, when he was lost at sea, all for the joke’s sake.

Do you remember Capt. Bathurst’s nautical anecdote of the boatswain shooting the Frenchman who asked for quarter while running down the hatchway, “ No, no, you — , you fired first ” ?

As for the Moray, he had no business whatever to put the lines in peril of publication. I desired him to give them to *you*, and their *signature* must have showed you in what spirit they were written. And I am very glad that you have given him a lecture on the subject ; having the greatest delight in setting you all by the ears.

¹ See *Letters and Journals*, iv. 423.

If you *will* dine with Bristol Hunt, and such like, what can you expect ? But never mind, you are in, and I can assure you that there is not a blackguard among your constituents half so happy as I am in seeing your triumph. I never would have forgiven you the use of such instruments, except in favour of success. And pray don't *mistake me* ; it is not against the pure principle of reform that I protest, but against low, designing, dirty levellers, who would pioneer their way to a democratical tyranny, putting these fellows in a parenthesis, I think, as I have ever thought on that point, as it *used* to be defined ; but things have changed their sense probably, as they have their names, since my time. Four years ago *Radical* was unknown as a political watchword.

I am sorry to hear what you say of Scrope ; it must have been *sore* distress which made that man forget himself. Poor fellow, his name seems not fortunate ; there was Goose Davies, and now there is a Captain (who has planted his servant and run away for mistaking signatures) of the same nomenclature ; but what can have become of Scrope ? Does nobody know ? He could hardly remain at Bruges ; it is hard that he should "point a moral and adorn a tale," unless of his own telling, and his loss is the most "ill-convenient for my Lord Castlecorner" that could have occurred. I shall never hear such jokes again. What fools we were to let him go back in 1816, from Switzerland. He would, at least, have saved his credit and money, and then, *what* is he to do ? He can't *play*, and without play he is wretched.

You have, by this time, seen all my *prose* and poesie. I don't think of publishing the *former*, but I wish you to read it. From Murray I have heard nothing lately.

I sometimes think of going to England in autumn, but it is a project so repugnant to my feelings, that my resolutions fade as the time approaches.

Yours, ever truly, B.

P. B. Shelley to Byron

PISA, May 26th, 1820.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—On a return from an excursion among the mountains, I find your letter. Clare tells me that she has already answered what relates to the differences of opinion between you and her about Allegra ; so I am spared the pain of being an interlocutor in a matter over which, I believe, I have no influence either as it regards her, or you. I wish you had not expressed yourself so harshly in your letter about Clare—because of necessity she was obliged to read it ; and I am persuaded that you are mistaken in thinking she has any desire of thwarting your plans about Allegra—even the requests that annoy you spring from an amiable and affectionate disposition. She has consented to give up this journey to Ravenna—which would indeed have been a material inconvenience, and annoyance to me, as well as you—but which, for such a purpose, I hardly felt that I could refuse. When we meet, I can explain to you some circumstances of misrepresentation respecting Allegra which, I think, will lead you to find an excuse for Clare's anxiety. What letters she writes to you I know not ; perhaps they are very provoking ; but at all events it is better to forgive the weak. I do not say—I do not think—that your resolutions are unwise ; only express them mildly—and pray don't *quote me*.

I have read your "Don Juan" in print, and I observe that the *murrain* has killed some of the finest of the flock, *i.e.*, that your bookseller has omitted certain passages. The personal ones, however, though I thought them wonderfully strong, I do not regret. What a strange and terrible storm is that at sea, and the two fathers, how true, yet how strong a contrast ! Dante hardly exceeds it. With what flashes of divine beauty have you not illuminated the familiarity of your subject towards the end ! The love letter, and the account of its being written, is altogether a masterpiece of portraiture ; of human nature laid with

the eternal colours of the feelings of humanity. Where did you learn all these secrets ? I should like to go to school there. I cannot say I equally approve of the service to which this letter was appropriated ; or that I altogether think the bitter mockery of our common nature, of which this is one of the expressions, quite worthy of your genius. The power and the beauty and the wit, indeed, redeem all this—chiefly because they belie and refute it. Perhaps it is foolish to wish that there had been nothing to redeem. My tragedy you will find less horrible than you had reason to expect.¹ At all events it is matter-of-fact. If I had known you would have liked to have seen it, I could have sent you a copy, for I printed it in Italy, and sent it to England for publication. Did you see a little poem called “Rosalind and Helen” of mine ? It was a mere extempore thing, and worth little, I believe. If you wish to see it, I can send it you.

I hope you know what my feelings, and those of Mary have ever been, about Allegra. Indeed, we are not yet cured of our affection for her ; and whatever plans you and Clare agree upon, about her future life, remember that *we*, as friends to all parties, would be most happy to be instrumental to her welfare. I smiled at your protest about what you consider my creed. On the contrary, I think a regard to chastity is quite necessary, as things are, to a young female—that is, to her happiness—and at any time a good habit. As to Christianity—there I am vulnerable ; though I should be as little inclined to teach a child disbelief, as belief, as a formal creed. You are misinformed, too, as to our system of physical education ; but I can guess the source of this mistake. I say all this, not to induce you to depart from your plan (nor would Clare consent to Allegra’s residing with us for any length of time), but

¹ *The Cenci*. Begun May 1819, and completed in three months. It was first printed at Leghorn, and sent to Ollier Brothers to be sold in England. Only 250 copies were thus transmitted in October 1819. Shelley originally designed it for the stage.

only to acquaint you with our feelings on the subject—which are, and must ever be, friendly to you, and yours.

It would give me the greatest pleasure to come into your part of the world¹ and see you in any other character than as the mediator; or rather the interpreter, of a dispute. At all events we shall meet some day in London, I hope *auspicio meliore*. Mary desires not to be forgotten, and I remain,

Dear Lord Byron,
Yours very sincerely, P. B. SHELLEY.

Byron to Hobhouse

RAVENNA, June 22nd, 1820.

The papers announce the Queen's arrival and its consequences. They have sent a message to our House. What the opinion in England may be, I know not, but *here* (and we are in her late neighbourhood) there are no doubts about her and her blackguard Bergami. I have just asked Madame la Comtesse G., who was at Pesaro two years ago, and she announces that the thing was as public as such a thing can be. It is to me subject of regret, for in England she was ever hospitable and kind to me.

I have never seen her since. If you see the Davys,² give my regards, and tell Lady Davy that I shall answer her letter the moment I am aware of her arrival in England.

Yours ever and truly, B.

RAVENNA, July 6th, 1820.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I am [in] the 4th act of Marino Faliero; you may keep back the rest of the trash till I have shaped the new Sooterkin. I regret nothing but the *fee*; but even the fee in such cases should be a

¹ Byron was at Ravenna.

² Sir Humphry Davy (1778–1829), a great scientist and a Fellow of the Royal Society. He was knighted in 1812, and died at Geneva 1829. Lady Davy, whom he married in 1812, was a rich widow, well-known in the society of London and Rome. Madame de Staël said of her that she had “All Corinne’s talents without her faults or extravagances.”

secondary consideration. “The Adversary” (Vittoria Corombona—the White Devil,¹ that is); *there*, I grant you, I am vulnerable, and when a person has made you pass through the pretty reports that this one strewed my path with, you will sympathize with my insanity upon that topic; why don’t you also take such another wife?

How is my *Shield*? You never name her.

I have got a motto for my Doge conspirator, Eccolo—“*Dux inquieti turbidus Adriæ*,”—ain’t it a good one?

I see by the papers you prosper in Parliament,—go on. As to autumn and Switzerland, that is as hereafter it may be,—“*who knows?*” The *mortgage*, eh? and the suit with the counsellors at law? tell me. I am in a scrape on all sides, at home and abroad.

Yours very truly, B.

P.S.—When the Pope has decided on Madame Guiccioli’s business² (it is actually before him), I will tell you whether I can come to England (viâ Switzerland) or not; the relations *for* her, and the husband against her, are stirring up the whole conclave. You may suppose, as pugilistic Jackson says, that I have “a pretty time of it.” I can’t settle anything till I know the result, which will probably be a separation; he is trying to prove the adultery—which in Italy is no easy matter to prove to a tribunal. There has not been such a row in Romagna these hundred years on private matters, and we expect on one side or the other a fair *stilletata*. It is the fashion: they killed a carabineer the other day, and wounded another—that is, some country gentlemen did, because they had been shut out of the theatre.

RAVENNA, September 21st, 1820.

MY DEAR H.,—If I could be of any real use to the Queen, or to anybody else, I would have come long

¹ John Webster’s play, *The White Devil, or the Tragedy of Paulo Giordano Ursini, Duke of Brachiano, with the Life and Death of Vittoria Corombona, the Famous Venetian Curtizan*, published in 1612.

² See *Letters and Journals*, v. 49.

ago, but I see no advantage to her, nor to others. I have done my best to get the Pesaro Patricians to travel (which lies about tumults and ill-treatment seemed about to prevent), but I made Count Gamba here write to the Macchiavellis (the first family in Pesaro, and his relatives), and he has sent one of them agoing, who has letters from me for divers; and amongst others for *you*.

Be civil to the bearer when he arrives; he is a great man at Fano, and a witness for her Maesta!

Another thing that kept me here (besides my serventismo), was that here we all expected, and had actually got on “our bandoliers,” with “an unco band of blue bonnets at our backs,” for a regular rising and all that; in which I, amongst thousands, was to have a part, being urged thereto by my love of liberty in general, and of Italy in particular; and also by the good opinion which some of the confederates had of me as a coadjutor, but all of a sudden the *City of Sausages*¹ (do you understand me?) withdrew from the league; and wanted to temper and to temporize, and so leave us in the lurch. Of course without *B[ologna]* the Romagnuole towns can do but little, with the Germans on the Po; and so here we are, the principals, liable to arrest every day, “some taken and some left,” like the “foolish virgins” (or some other parable) in the Evangelist.

In the meantime there is a little stabbing and shooting, but in a small way; guards doubled, palace shut at ten o’ nights, and the Cardinal praying to Saint Apollinari, the patron saint of the city, who should protect the city against the Austrians, if he does his duty.

I never was fool enough to think of having Brougham out till the Queen’s settled; but as “Nullum tempus occurrit regi,” so, nullum tempus occurrit honori.²

In Purefoy and Roper’s business, seven years had

¹ Bologna.

² See Letter to Douglas Kinnaird, 16 Nov. 1819.

taken place. In Tollemache (the son's) *fifteen*; in Stackpole and Cecil's *three*, since the provocation. All depends upon the parties having met, or no. You know that I have never been near Brougham since his insults; and was ignorant of them till long after their occurrence. *Keep this in mind, as you yourself were* one of my informants, and I am sorry to say, though (from a good motive) a late one. If I come to England now, I must wait till his trial of the Queen is over before I can have him out, but if his meeting me is *guaranteed me* for the moment that's over, I will come, and do my best for her, otherwise not. He would be sure at present to make that a plea and an excuse, and I should be a fool to think of overruling it, but neither that nor four, nor five years, nor ten, nor twenty, do, nor ought to prevent me from satisfaction, whenever, and wherever we encounter.

My cartel and its reasons I have already in writing, and have had since the hour I thought of returning to England. Sure I am that you and Douglas K. will approve it, when you see them. I have no other object nor view till this can be settled.

Here at Ravenna nobody believes the evidence against the Queen¹; they say that for half the money they could have any testimony they please, this is the public talk.

The "Hints, &c." are good; are they? As to the friends, we can change their names unless they rhyme well, in that case they must stand. Except Scott and Jeffrey and Moore, Sir B. Burges and a few more, I know no friends who need to be left out of a good poem.

Has Murray shown you my play?² Pray look at it, I want your opinion, you know I have taken it lately in such good part, that you need not mind being a little rough, if necessary. It is long enough, an' that be all.

¹ For a long note on Queen Caroline, see *Letters and Journals*, v. 60.

² *Hints from Horace*, left with Hobhouse in 1816.

³ *Marino Faliero*.

Murray told me that Lady Noel was ill ; he lied I believe. I suppose, if she returns to whence she came, she will take her "divining rod" with her ; it may be of use to her at home, and to her neighbour the rich man (Dives, clothed in purple), mentioned in the play of Henry 4th, and by the evangelists.¹

But the lady will not die, her living does too much ill. You'll see, she'll recover and bury her betters,
Write to yours, B.

P.S. Pray make your motion ; you make a great figure in Galignani, who, by the way, has withheld his messengers since the paragraphs of my arrival in England, believing them.

Fletcher is ill, and has had three pounds of blood let since yesterday, for a sore throat. In his jacket and handkerchief and foolish face he looks like Liston, or much such a figure as he did in Albania in 1809 during the autumnal rains in his jerkin and umbrella. As Justice Shallow says, "Oh the merry days that we have seen !"²

September 25th, 1820.

DEAR H[OBHOUSE],—I open my letter to enclose you one which contains some hints which may be useful to Queeney, and her orators, but mind and don't betray the writer *H.* or he will lose *his place*.

When you wanted me to come, you forgot that absence during the earlier part of the stages of the bill *precludes voting*. I see by the papers that more than two days' absence does. Dunque, or adunque—argal.

Yours, B.

P.S. Brougham says "*discorso*" is not Italian ! Oh rare ! It and "*discorrere*" are as common as c——. I suppose that fellow thinks "*conversazione*" means *conversation*.

Apropos of Italian witnesses, since I have been in

¹ Lady Noel used the divining-rod to discover water.

² 2nd Henry IV, Act III, Scene II : "O, the mad days that I have spent ! and to see how many of mine old acquaintance are dead ! "

Italy I have had *six* law-suits, twice as plaintiff against debtors, once about horseflesh as plaintiff, twice about men's wives as defendant, and once as defendant against shopkeepers wanting to be paid *twice* over for the same bills. I gained them all but the horse-dealer's; he diddled me. In the shopkeeper's one last Nov. the fellow declared positively in a court, that *I ordered in person the articles in company with my secretaries*, and when desired to describe me, described me as a *tall thin flaxen-haired man!!* Of course he was non-suited. This fellow was reckoned one of the *most respectable negocianti* in Venice.

If you can quote this you may, and I'll prove it if necessary.

Byron to Kinnaird

RAVENNA, 8^{bis} 1st, 1820.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—I have sent H[obhouse] some letters on the Queen's affairs (one goes by this post), has he got them?

I sent Murray a tragedy (written *not* for the stage), read it if you can. It is full of republicanism, so will find no favour in Albemarle Street.

They had got up as pretty a plot here as Hotspur's, when lo a City with sixty thousand men *bilked* them, and here we all are, in great confusion, some in arrest, some for flying to the hills, and for making a guerilla fight for it, others for waiting for better times, and both sides watching each other like hunting leopards. The fact is the Government is weak, for a Government, and the constitutionals strong for such, but what will be the issue is doubtful. My *voice* was, like that of Sempronius, somewhat warlike, but the autumnal rains have damped a deal of military ardour. In the meantime both sides embody and pay bands of assassins, or *brigands* as they call them, at about ninepence a head per diem, so you may suppose that I could soon whistle a hundred or two lads to my back when I want

them, Portugal and Spain are the Whiteheaded boys after all.

Everything was ready, and we were all in our bandoliers. What a pity to have missed such an opportunity, but it was all the bloody Austrians on the Po. If they do but ever get a grip of those fellows, you will hear strange things, the Huns will have enough of it, at least such as fall into the hands of the natives. You may suppose that with such matters in possibility, it would be a satisfaction to know something of my worldly affairs, and to be as decently in cash as need be, so as to take the field with fair forage as [words torn off] every sixpence is a sinew of war. When you have perpended the drama at Murray's, let me know at what you rate it.

I have not come to England, not feeling myself pious enough to decide whether the Queen fell or no.

What trash your Parliament is.

Yours, B.

8^{bre} 10^o. I wrote this letter on the first of the moon, and kept back ten days, expecting to have a letter from you or Spooney. I have written twice to Hobby; ask him whether "*Lankey* has been into the slaughter-house yet," and whether there is not "too much *Tig. Tiri* in it?" he will understand these questions, *you* won't, for you have not taken the "Dunce's degree." Give Murray the Po verses, and let me have some of your own prose.

Byron to Hobhouse

RAVENNA, 8^{bre} 17th, 1820.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I hope that you have safely received my two late letters, which contained two letters from H[oppne]r relative to the Queen's concern. D[ougla]s K[innair]d has written to me, but he lets that legal Spooney go on as he pleases, so that the funds will fall and fall, and who knows what thousands of pounds may be lost by his dawdling? Do pray stir him up with a long pole, and make him a speech, sharp

as those you produce in Parliament. Recollect that distance makes me helpless.

Have you seen Murray ? and read my “Tig. and Tiri ?” Have you “gone again into the slaughter-house, Lankey ?”

Murray hath projects of publication, about the *purse* too, regarding which I will abide by *your opinion*, which was against publishing the *Blackwood*, &c. I will rest with y^r decision in that matter, whatever it be.

Foscolo thinks the tragedy very good Venetian, and Gifford says it is sterling English.

Now is a good time for the Prophecy of Dante ; events have acted as an advertisement thereto—egad I think I am as good a vates (prophet, videlicet) as Fitzgerald¹ of the Morning Post.

On politics I shall say nothing, the post being somewhat suspect.

I see that you are still “campaining at the King of Bohemy.” Your last speech is at great length in Galignani, and so you were “called to order”; but I think you had the best of it.

You have done your part very well in parliament to my mind ; it was just the place for you, keep it up, and go on.

If ever I come home, I will make a speech too, though I doubt my extempore talents in that line ; and then *our* house is not animating like the hounds of the Commons when in full cry. ’Tis but cold hunting at best in the Lords.

I never could command my own attention to either side of their oratory, but either went away to a ball, or to a beef-steak at Bellamy’s, and as there is no answering without listening, nor listening without patience, I doubt whether I should ever make a debater.

I think I spoke four times in all there ; and I did not find my facility increase with practice.

D[ougla]s K[innair]d did not mention you in his letters, which are always filled with radical politics, all

¹ W. T. Fitzgerald, The “hoarse Fitzgerald” of *English Bards*, etc. See *Letters*, iii. 10.

which I have in the newspapers. I wish he was in parliament again, which I suppose he wishes too.

We have sad sirocco weather here at present, and no very bright political horizon. But on that I shall say nothing, because I *know* that they have spies upon me, because I sometimes shoot with a rifle ! The exquisite reason ! you will laugh, and think of Pope and the clerks of the Post Office, but in fact I assure you, they are in such a state of suspicion as to dread everything and everybody ; and though I have been a year here, and they know why I came hence, yet they don't think a woman a sufficing reason for so long a residence.

As for the scoundrel Austrians, they are bullying Lombardy as usual. It would be pleasant to see those Huns get their paiks, and it is not off the cards that they may.

Yours ever, B.

They sent an order from Rome to disarm my servants. The best of it is that they were *not armed* !

Byron to Kinnaird

RAVENNA, 8^{bre} 26th, 1820.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—By last post I consigned to Mr. Murray a letter on business for the Lady Byron. In this I recommended strongly to her consideration (and to that of her trustees) the speedy removal of the settled property from the funds.

My motives are the almost immediate explosion which must take place in Italy in the impending event of the passage of the Po by the barbarians, now in great force on that river—and the further fall of the English funds in consequence ; as your Tory scoundrels will, right or wrong, take part in any foreign war.

I wish you to write to her in aid of my representation ; for God's sake, take advantage of any rise to sell out, otherwise it will ere long be too late. I know better than any of you what is brewing in Italy. Do not let the fortunes of my family be totally sacrificed at home, whatever I may be. Recollect that a month—a week

—a day—may render all this abortive, and press upon this implacable woman and her trustees, as well as upon that dog Hanson, the necessity of selling out immediately.

If I did not abhor your Tory country to a degree of detestation, this would have been remedied. I would last year have gone among you, and settled my own business at least, but I prefer anything almost, to making one of such a people as your present government has made of the present English.

I prefer almost anything else to living amongst you English, but it is still my duty to represent as far as I can what ought to be done by my trustees in my absence.

Yrs. truly and affectly., BYRON.

P.S. I have read lately several speeches of Hobhouse in taverns, his eloquence is better than his company. Tell him that if *Bergami* goes to England, the Courier of the innocent Queen will beat him for *Westminster*.

To give you a hint of the doings *here*. Since I began this letter, the news have arrived from Forli (the next and nearest city) that last night the liberals blew up, by means of a mine, the house of a “*Brigand*” (so they call here the Satellites of the tyrants during comedy time or opera time), but the master *was out*, and so escaped. People were arrested [words torn off] released them, and shot a blackguard, or one of the Carabineers. They have also intimated gently to his Eminence of Forli, that if he continues to arm *assassins* (here they war in private in this way, there are bands in every town at so much a head, for those who like such expenses), they will throw him out of his palace windows, which are rather lofty. If these things don’t prelude “sword and gun fighting,” you can judge for yourself.

Get me out of your funds ; write in your best manner to the Mathematician¹—your letters of business are *models*, your other letters somewhat brief and hasty—and persuade that excellent female to allow me to be an

¹ Lady Byron.

" Irish Absentee " before the three per cents are at no per cent. If she don't, I will come over, be a radical, and take possession of the Kirkby Estate before Lady Noel is in Hell—no long time if people went there alive, but she will live for ever to plague her betters.

You should set up a Radical newspaper and call it "the *Bergami*," it would beat Mr. Street's now-a-days.

RAVENNA, 9th 5th, 1820.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—The enclosed letters contain a representation from the town of Rochdale (of 30,000 inhabitant radical souls) to their liege lord of the manor, to permit a new market-place, owing no doubt to the exuberance of provisions, which the times have left in Lancashire. There seem to be two parties, *for* and *against* the proposed Piazza. To which should I incline? You are a man of affairs, and should know. I am full of philanthropy, but must maintain my manorial rights. Read, perpend, pronounce, or ask Spooney.

By your papers, I see that her Majesty the *Queen* is likely to triumph over her Tory opponents. It is a good thing in more ways than one, and the reading of the evidence will greatly multiply our stock of grandchildren.

Yrs. ever and truly, BYRON.

P.S. I wrote twice lately to your Eminence.

Byron to Hobhouse

R[AVENNA], November 9th, 1820.

MY DEAR H[OBHOUSE],—I admit the force of your facetiousness, which it will go hard but I pay off some day or other; as Scrope used to say, "I have things in store." Indolent I am to be sure, and yet I can back a horse and fire a carbine, like Major Sturgeon,¹ "without winking or blinking," and I can go without my dinner without scolding, or eat it without finding fault with the cooking or quality; and I could slumber as in Turkey, when some of my friends were loudly

¹ Foote's *Mayor of Garratt*.

execrating their bed and its tenantry. Yours is now a more active life, I admit ; you write pamphlets against Canning, and make speeches, and "greatly *daring dine*" at the Crown and Anchor. And this *is* being active and useful, and justifies your reproach of my slumbers. We will divide the parts between us of "*player and poet*," as you have taken up the former one with great success. Now "I have the best of that," I think, as I used to say to you in the wilderness. And then *you* counsel me to keep out of a *scrape*. *You!* Why, have your prudence and activity kept you out of one ? I think not ; you will find some day that your radicals will embarrass you sufficiently. But, in the meantime, you are certainly making a figure in point of *talent*, that is a fact, and so you would in any other line, because you *happen to have great talent*, more, I think, than you yourself or others have yet given you credit for ; and you are besides sure to train on, because you have strong powers of application ; but the *line* itself is not the true one, and was not your own choice, but the result of circumstances, united to a little natural impatience for having waited for an opening. Egad, I talk like an angel !

Oh, you must know that I sent H[oppner]'s letter without asking him, so say nothing about that ; I thought it might serve the *Queen* in her cause, and you in her behalf, and sent it, trusting to your discretion ; pray do not compromise him, nor anybody else. "*Young man*," quotha ! he is six and thirty, that is, two years older than you, and three years and three months more than me. I see the papers call *you* "*young*," I am glad of it, but though I am your junior, I have thought myself *eldern* this many a day.

I hope that you will turn out those Tory scoundrels.

I do not quarrel with my "*old cronies*," nor my "*old cronies*" with me, I hope, and as for the ballad, *you* have *balladed* me fifty times, and are welcome to fifty more ; recollect at *Brighton*, at *Newstead*, and just before leaving England, and *since*.

Yours ever and truly, BN.

Byron to Kinnaird

RAVENNA, 9^{bre} 22nd, 1820.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—The affairs of this part of Italy are simplifying ; the liberals have delayed till it is too late for them to do anything to the purpose. If the scoundrels of Troppau decide on a massacre (as is probable) the Barbarians will march in by one frontier, and the Neapolitans by the other. They have *both asked* permission of his Holiness so to do, which is equivalent to asking a man's permission to give him a kick on the a—e ; if he grants it, it is a sign he can't return it.

The worst of all is, that this devoted country will become, for the six thousandth time, since God made man in his own image, the seat of war. I recollect Spain in 1808, and the Morea and part of Greece in 1810—1811, when Veli Pacha was on his way to combat the Russians (the Turkish armies make their *own country* like an enemy's on a march), and a small stretch also of my own county of Nottingham under the Luddites, when we were burning the frames, and sometimes the manufactories, so that I have a tolerable idea of what may ensue. Here all is suspicion and terrorism, bullying, arming, and disarming ; the priests scared, the people gloomy, and the merchants *buying* up corn to *supply the armies*. I am so pleased with the last piece of Italic patriotism, that I have underlined it for your remark ; it is just as if our Hampshire farmers should prepare magazines for any two continental scoundrels, who could land and fight it out in New Forest.

I come in for my share of the *vigorous* system of the day. They have taken it into their heads that I am popular (which no one ever was in Italy but an opera singer, or ever will be till the resurrection of Romulus), and are trying by all kinds of petty vexations to disgust and make me retire. This I should hardly believe, it seems so absurd, if some of their priests did not avow it. They try to fix squabbles upon my servants, to involve me in scrapes (no difficult matter), and lastly

they (the governing party) menace to shut Madame Guiccioli up in a *convent*. The last piece of policy springs from two motives ; the one because her family are suspected of liberal principles, and the second because mine (although I do not preach them) are known, and were known when it was far less reputable to be a friend to liberty than it is now.

If I am proud of some of the poetry, I am much prouder of some of my predictions ; they are as good as Fitzgerald's, the Literary Fund seer, and Murray's post poet.

If they should succeed in putting this poor girl into a convent for doing that with me which all the other countesses of Italy have done with everybody for these thousand years, of course I would accede to a retreat on my part, rather than a prison on hers, for the former only is what they *really* want. She is, as women are apt to be by opposition, sufficiently heroic and obstinate ; but as both these qualities may only tend the more to put her in monastic durance, I am at a loss what to do.

I have seen the correspondence of half a dozen bigots on the subject, and perceive that they have set about it, merely as an indirect way of attacking part of her relations, and myself.

You may imagine that I am, as usual, in warm water with this affair in prospect.

The police at present is under the Germans, or rather the Austrians, who do not merit the name of Germans, who open all letters it is supposed. I have no objection, so that they see how I hate and utterly despise and detest those *Hun brutes*, and all they can do in their temporary wickedness, for Time and Opinion, and the vengeance of a roused-up people will at length manure Italy with their carcases, it may not be for one year, or two, or ten, but it *will* be, and so that it *could be* sooner, I know not what a man ought *not* to do, but their antagonists are no great shakes. The Spaniards are the boys after all.

Pray remember me to Hobhouse, and believe me ever

Yours most truly, B.

CHAPTER XI

VENICE—PISA

(1821)

LETTERS from Shelley form a large part of this chapter. They refer to the difficulties about Clare and Allegra and to the death of Keats, which inspired the writing of *Adonais*, and contain an invitation to Byron to join the Shelley party at Pisa. In August Shelley paid a visit to Byron in Ravenna.

They also deal with the painful incident of the accusations made by Elise Foggi, Allegra's nurse, against Shelley and Clare Clairmont and reported by Mrs. Hoppner to Byron. The comments on these letters have been kindly furnished by my friend Mr. Richard Edgcumbe, who has made a special study of the subject.

There is no direct evidence to prove whether Byron did or did not forward Mrs. Shelley's letter to Mrs. Hoppner, and the collateral evidence is very vague. There is, however, one undisputed fact that carries great weight. The correspondence took place in August: in September Shelley persuaded Byron to join him in Pisa, found a house for him, and signed the "compact" for it on his behalf. Byron went to Pisa at the end of October and lived on terms of close friendship with the Shelleys until his death, and with Mrs. Shelley afterwards, as is shown by her letters in 1823. The whole question must have been discussed during that time, and the fact that Mrs. Shelley deliberately cut Mrs. Hoppner when

she met her in Florence in 1843 goes to prove that her resentment had not cooled and that she regarded Mrs. Hoppner as the culprit. “The Hoppners are here,” she wrote. “Mrs. and Miss go to the balk. I cut her completely.”

In October Byron quitted Ravenna and took up his quarters at the Palazzo Lanfranchi at Pisa.

The chief writings of the year are: *Sardanapalus*, *The Two Foscari*, *Cain*, *Heaven and Earth*, *The Vision of Judgment*, and the two *Letters to the Rev. W. L. Bowles on the Writings of Pope*.

Byron to Kinnaird

RAVENNA, *Fy.* 22nd, 1821.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—Read the enclosed letter to Murray,¹ put a wafer in it, and either present or forward it, as you please.

On reading your letter again, I do not know (if the landed interest be so low) whether we should not rather sell out and *purchase*, rather than lend on mortgage, what think you? if a bargain offered. My mother's estate of Gight² was sold to the former Lord Aberdeen many years ago, before I was born, I believe; I have always preferred my mother's family for its *royalty*, and if I could buy it back, I would consent, even at a reduction of income. It is in Scotland. What think you of this or some such? Write to

Yrs. ever, BYRON.

RAVENNA, *March 9th*, 1821.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—You ask me why I don't go to Paris. Ask the trustees.³ But independent of that

¹ Probably the letter of 21 Feb., in which he gives a detailed account of his swimming exploits. *Letters and Journals*, v. 246.

² Mrs. Byron sold her ancestral estate of Gight, in Aberdeenshire, to Lord Aberdeen in 1787 (the year before Byron was born) to pay off her husband's debts.

³ Byron, in the whole course of his life, never entered any part of France. These words seem to imply that he was under some legal restriction which denied to him that privilege.



THE HON DOUGLAS KINNAIRD

From a portrait in the possession of Lord Kinnaird

consideration, though I read and comprehend French with far more ease and pleasure than Italian (which is a heavy language to read in *prose*), yet my foreign speech is Italian, and my way of life very little adapted to the eternal French vivaciousness, and gregarious loquacity. As to the impression which you say that I should make ; at *three and twenty* it might perhaps have fascinated me, at *three and thirty* it is indifferent. It is also incomprehensible to me, how it can be as Moore and you both say, for surely my habits of thought and writing must cut a queer figure in a prose translation, which is the only medium through which they know them. Besides, I am in some measure familiarized and domesticated in Italy, where I put my daughter the other day in a convent for education.¹

You say nothing of Canto 5th, whence I infer that it has not your imperial approbation. Never mind.² Tell Hobhouse that I wrote to him a fortnight ago.

Of politics I *could* say a good deal, and must therefore be silent, for all letters are opened now, and though I care not about myself, I might perhaps compromise others. They *missed* here only by five days. Understand you ?

I have had a civil proposal from a Mr. Fearman, bookseller, 170 New Bond Street, to treat for the “*Don Juan*. ” Pray give him a *civil* answer for me, and say, “*supposing* that I were the author of that poem, Mr. Murray would have naturally the refusal.” F. wrote under the idea that I had not treated with Murray.³

It is not my intention to come to England at present. Perhaps I may take a run over after the *coronation*, because I have a little affair to settle which has been on my mind some time.⁴ But in case of settling it, and

¹ At Bagni di Cavallo, near Ravenna.

² *Don Juan*. It was the fifth canto of which Shelley declared every word was stamped with immortality. “I despair of rivalling Lord Byron, as well I may, and there is no other with whom it is worth contending.” *Life of Shelley* by Edward Dowden, ii. 431.

³ See *Letters and Journals*, v. 258.

⁴ His contemplated duel with Brougham.

surviving the settlement, I should wish to return to Italy. Till Lady N. goes home how could the *fee* suffice ?

Yours ever, B.

Mr. Murray has requested to publish the *Juan*, before he settles, and I have acceded to this. He must also publish the Italian translation from the *Morgante*, and the Hints from Horace. Have you seen my letter on Bowles' Pope ?

P. B. Shelley to Byron

PISA, April 16th, 1821.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—On my return from a tour in this neighbourhood, I find your letter, which has therefore remained unanswered.

I think I mentioned to you before that I never see any of Clare's letters to you. I can easily believe, however, that they are sufficiently provoking, and that her views respecting Allegra are unreasonable. Mary, no less than myself, is perfectly convinced of your conduct towards Allegra having been most irreproachable, and we entirely agree in the necessity, under existing circumstances, of the placing her in a convent near to yourself.¹ I think you ought to consider Clare's opposition to this, if she makes any, as the result of a misguided maternal affection, which is to be pitied, while we condemn. I have not shown her your letter. Surely it is better to avoid causes of irritation, though the only ill-effect should be to torment the person who feels it. I need not say what pleasure it would give me to hear from you on this, or any other subject. Mary unites with me also in expressions of the greatest interest for Allegra ; and if circumstances should ever occur, to induce you to change your present plans respecting her, she intreats you to believe that she is most anxious to shew it.

I see by the papers that you have published a tragedy on the subject of which you spoke when I saw you at

¹ The convent at Bagni di Cavallo.

Venice.¹ I have not yet seen it, though I am most anxious to observe this new phasis of your power. The last work of yours I have seen is "Don Juan," in the poetical parts of which you seem to have equalled the finest passages in your former poems; except the curse in "Manfred," the stanzas in Chillon in the 3rd, and the address to Ocean, in the 4th Canto of "Childe Harold." You have now arrived about at the age at which those eternal poets, of whom we have authentic accounts, have ever begun their supreme poems; considering all their others, however transcendent, as the steps, the scaffolding, the exercise which may sustain and conduct them to their great work. If you are inferior to these, it is not in genius, but industry and resolution. Oh, that you would subdue yourself to the great task of building up a poem containing within itself the germs of a permanent relation to the present, and to all succeeding ages!

Young Keats, whose "Hyperion" showed so great a promise, died lately at Rome from the consequences of breaking a blood-vessel, in paroxysms of despair at the contemptuous attack on his book in the *Quarterly Review*. Adieu. Mary unites with me in best regards.

Yours most faithfully, P. B. SHELLEY.²

Byron to Hobhouse

RAVENNA, April 26th, 1821.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—You know by this time, with all Europe, the precious treachery and desertion of the Neapolitans.³ I was taken in, like many others by their demonstrations, and have probably been more ashamed of them than they are of themselves.

I can write nothing by the post, but if ever we meet, I will tell you a thing or two, of no great importance perhaps, but which will serve you to laugh at. I can't laugh yet, the thing is a little too serious; if the

¹ *Marino Faliero*.

² For Byron's reply to this letter, see *Letters*, v. 266.

³ They surrendered in March to the Austrians almost without resistance. *Letters and Journals*, v. 273.

scoundrels had only compromised themselves, it would matter little ; but they were busy everywhere, and all for this ! The rest of the Italians execrate them as you will do, and all honest men of all nations.

Poland and Ireland were Sparta and Spartacus compared to these villains. But there is no room to be sufficiently bilious, nor bile enough to spit upon them.

I have had a letter from the Dougal. And one from you some weeks ago. I can give you no news in return that would interest you, and indeed what can interest one after such a business ?

I hear “ Rogers cuts *you* ” because I called him “ venerable.” The next time I will state his age, without the respectable epithet annexed to it, which in fact he does not deserve. However he is seventy-three, and I can prove it by the register.¹ We see by the papers that you dine, and return thanks as usual. Fletcher says that “ he supposes you have got Bergami’s place by this time ” ; his literal words I assure you, and not a clinch of mine.

With regard to your objections to my chastising that scoundrel Brougham, it will be time enough to answer them (and Douglas’s also) if ever we meet again, which is not very certain. When you take away an honourable motive for returning to England, why should I return ? To be abused and belied, and to live like a beggar with an income which in any other country would suffice for all the decencies of a gentleman.

Pray write when it suits you. I did not write because there was nothing to say that could be said without being pried into in this country of tyrants and spies, and foreign barbarians let loose upon it again.

From Murray I have had no news to signify, except some literary intelligence about myself and other scribblers. I know nothing of the fortunes of my publications, and can wait.

I hope that you and yours prosper.

Ever yours most affectionately, BN.

¹ Rogers born 1763, died 1855. He was 58 in 1821.

P. B. Shelley to Byron

PISA, May 4th, 1821.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—Your idea of our meeting this summer gives me the highest gratification ; the more so, because the circumstance of Clare's not being with us makes me hope that it is not impracticable. Will you come and spend this summer with us in our retirement under the mountains of Pisa ? I live in my accustomed seclusion from society, which indeed I could not bear, even if it could bear me. You can easily imagine what pleasure a favourable reply will give both to Mary and to myself. If you come, bring whom you please, and make what arrangements are convenient to you, for we shall have “ample verge, and room enough.” Clare is now with some people who have been very kind to her, and who have introduced her into Italian society ; and with whom she will certainly remain all this summer, and perhaps, indeed, for a much longer time. She is not at Pisa.

The account of Keats is, I fear, too true. Hunt tells me that in the first paroxysms of his disappointment he burst a blood-vessel ; and thus laid the foundation of a rapid consumption. There can be no doubt but that the irritability which exposed him to this catastrophe was a pledge of future sufferings, had he lived. And yet this argument does not reconcile me to the employment of contemptuous and wounding expressions against a man merely because he has written bad verses ; or, as Keats did, some good verses in a bad taste.¹ Some plants, which require delicacy in rearing, might bring forth beautiful flowers if ever they should arrive at maturity. Your instance hardly applies. You felt the strength to soar beyond the arrows ; the eagle was soon lost in the light in which it was nourished, and the eyes of the aimers were blinded. As to me, I am, perhaps, morbidly indifferent to this sort of praise or blame ; and this, perhaps, deprives me of an incitement to do what now I never

¹ See Byron's letter to Murray, 26 April 1821. *Letters*, v. 269.

shall do, i.e., write anything worth calling a poem. Thanks to that happy indifference, I can yet delight in the productions of those who can ; nor has ill-success yet turned me into an unfeeling, and malignant critic ; that second degree in the descending scale of the Academy of Disappointed Authors. As to Keats' merits as a poet, I principally repose them upon the fragment of a poem entitled "Hyperion," which you may not, perhaps, have seen, and to which I think you would not deny high praise. The energy and beauty of his powers seem to disperse the narrow and wretched taste in which (most unfortunately for the real beauty which they hide) he has clothed his writings. I have not seen your pamphlet, but have sent to Paris for it, where I see it has been republished.¹ The tragedy I have not yet seen either ; my anxiety to see it is very great. We look to you for substituting something worthy of the English stage, for the miserable trash which, from Milman to Barry Cornwall, has been intruded on it since the demand for tragical representation. I did not know that Keats had attacked Pope ; I had heard that Bowles had done so, and that you had most severely chastised him therefor. Pope, it seems, has been selected as the pivot of a dispute in taste, on which, until I understand it, I must profess myself neuter. I certainly do not think Pope, or *any* writer, a fit model for any succeeding writer ; if he, or they should be determined to be so, it would all come to a question as to under *what forms* mediocrity should perpetually reproduce itself ; for true genius vindicates to itself an exemption from all regard to whatever has gone before—and in this question I feel no interest. My "Cenci" had, I believe, a complete failure—at least the silence of the bookseller would say so. I am aware of the unfitness of the subject, now it is written, but I had a different opinion in composition. I wish I could believe that it merited—or that anything of mine merited—the friendly commendations that you

¹ Letter on the Bowles' Pope controversy.

give them. The "Prometheus" is also a very imperfect poem. I begin to learn, "quid valeant humeri, quid ferre recusent."

This attempt in Italy has certainly been a most unfortunate business. With no strong personal reasons to interest me, my disappointment on public grounds has been excessive. But I cling to moral and political hope, like a drowner to a plank. Our own country is, perhaps, on the brink of demanding all our sympathies.

I shall regularly forward to Clare the monthly dispatches of Signor Zambelli.¹ I think you would save her some pain by directing him to be regular, and full in his communications. I can perceive, from what you say, that Clare has written you very absurd letters. I hope that she will be cured of the exaggerated ideas from which such conduct arises in the society with which she has now [become?] conversant. Our solitary mode of life, and my abstracted manner of thinking, were very unfit for her; and have probably been the sources of all her errors. It is well, therefore, that I should intercede for their forgiveness.

I expect with great anxiety your answer, as to whether I am to have the great delight of seeing you with me this summer. In the event of a disappointment, I shall certainly try to pay you a visit; but many circumstances will conspire to make it short, and inconvenient to me.

My dear Lord Byron,

Ever yours most faithfully, P. B. SHELLEY.

Byron to Hobhouse

RAVENNA, May 20th, 1821.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Galignani gave with great accuracy your defence, and offence; for "this defence"

¹ Byron's secretary.

² Soon after Hobhouse entered the House Canning made two attacks on him, and on 17 April Hobhouse, speaking on Mr. Lambton's motion regarding Reform, delivered a philippic in reply. *Recollections of a Long Life*, ii. 145 et seqq., and *Letters and Journals*, v. 292.

offensive comes by cause"—against Mr. Canning, which is as pretty a piece of invective as one would wish to read on a summer's day. You served him right, because he had attempted, like Addison, "to cuff down new-fledged merit." Besides, to talk of "a demagogue's dimensions" to a gentleman of the middle stature was downright "scurrilous."

But you have not spared him, like the boatswain in boarding the French vessel (don't you remember Bathurst's story ?) "No, no, you —, *you* fired first." It is a piece of eloquence, and the style much more *easy* than your usual prose (in *writing* that is), and I begin to think that your real strength lies in vituperation.

How did he look under it ? He has not attempted any rejoinder, but I suppose that you will be both at it for the remainder of your lives. It must have had a great effect. I am glad that you quoted Pope too ; that's always right, though you might have left out the further quotation from Sir Carr Scrope,¹ a vulgar lampooner of the most licentious gang of Charles the Second's reign.

You will be well acquainted with the row about the ryghte merry and conceitede tragedy of your humble servant. But you do not know that for *four* days I believed it damned, owing to a paragraph from an Italian French paper, which added that *I had brought* it on the stage ! The next post set me at ease on that point, by papers and letters explaining the whole thing, but making me wonder that either the town or the Chancellor permitted the buffoons to go on acting it. I bore the belief with philosophy, as my letter to Murray, written during the interval, will show. But this very circumstance is an additional one against the managers, for what can compensate for such days to a man who had so anxiously avoided the exhibition ?²

¹ Sir Carr Scrope, first Baronet, 1649–1680.

² *Marino Faliero* was put upon the stage by Elliston. A Milan newspaper, on or about 12 May, stated that it had been universally

Ten years ago I should have gone crazy ; at present I have lived on as usual. I will have the question brought to a pleading, however, just to see how the right really stands.

It is thus far of import to all writers for the future.

Douglas has written, but neither you nor Moray nor anybody else. I cannot write news because the letters are all opened. However, I suppose you know what is no news, that the Neapolitans were bought and sold.

The *Spy* is *here* (in Ravenna) who carried the letters between Frimont¹ and Carrascosa, and complains publicly of being but ill-paid for his pains. Perhaps he may be *better* paid if he don't take care. It is a savage sort of neighbourhood.

Our Greek acquaintance are making a fight for it, which must be a dilemma for the Allies, who can neither take their part (as liberals) nor help longing for a leg and a wing, and bit of the heart of Turkey.

Will you tell Douglas that as he had agreed (and I also) upon *that* price with M[urray], that of course I abide by it ; but he should recollect that I have been entirely guided by *himself* (Douglas) and you in your opinions of what I ought to ask or receive. From my absence and ignorance how things stand in literature in England, it is impossible for me to know how to act otherwise. I do not even know how the Bowles pamphlet has sold, nor the drama, nor anything else.

Lady Noel is dangerously *well* again, I hear, Mrs. Leigh's news, who never sends anything agreeable, of herself or anybody else.

Yrs. ever, B.

condemned. It was also stated that Byron himself had brought the play forward. The truth being that Byron had opposed the production on the stage, and procured an injunction against Elliston, through the Lord Chancellor. In spite of this, the play was produced five times. *Letters and Journals*, v. 291 et sqq.

¹ Marshal Frimont commanded the Austrian troops sent to quell the insurrection in Naples. Pepe and Carrascosa were the Neapolitan commanders who surrendered at Rieti on 7 March. See *Letters and Journals*, v. 9.

Fletcher's respects, and *expects* that you and Canning will *fight*, but *hopes not*.

RAVENNA, July 6th, 1821.

MY DEAR H[OBHOUSE].—I have written by this post to Murray to omit the stanza to which you object.¹ In case he should forget, you can jog his memory. I have also agreed to a request of Madame Guiccioli's *not* to continue that poem further. She had read the French translation, and thinks it a detestable production. This will not seem strange even in Italian morality, because women all over the world always retain their freemasonry, and as that consists in the illusion of the sentiment which constitutes their sole empire (all owing to chivalry and the Goths—the Greeks knew better), all works which refer to the *comedy* of the passions, and laugh at sentimentalism, of course are proscribed by the whole *sect*. I never knew a woman who did not admire Rousseau, and hate Gil Blas, and de Grammont and the like, for the same reason. And I never met with a woman, English or foreign, who did not do as much by D. J.

As I am docile, I yielded, and promised to confine myself to the “highflying of Buttons,”—(you remember Pope's phrase)—for the time to come. You will be very glad of this, as an earlier opponent of that poem's publication.

I only read your Canningippic in the papers, but even there it was worthy of anything since those against Anthony.

You must not give letters to me; I have taken an oath against being civil ever since — but you will see my reason in the last note to Marino Faliero.

I have sent to England a tragedy a month ago, and I am in the *fifth* act of another. Murray has not acknowledged its arrival. I must one day break with that gentleman, if he is not the civiler.

¹ Hobhouse writing 19 June 1821, says: “By the way, do not cut at poor Queeney in your Don Juan about Semiramis and her Courier courier. She would feel it very much, I assure you.”

Of Burdett's affair I cannot judge, so I made an epigram on it, which I sent to Douglas K^d. By the way, now the *funds are up, stir him up*, and the bloody trustees. It would give me pleasure to see some of you, that I might gossip over the late revolt (or rather revolting) transactions of these parts. Things are far from quiet even now. Have you seen my "Elegy on the recovery of Lady Noel?"

"Behold the blessings of a lucky lot !
My play is damned—and Lady Noel *not.*"

Do you know that your bust was sent to England (viâ Livorno) months ago ?¹

Let me hear from or of you. Yours, B.

P.S. Fletcher is turned money-lender, and puts out money (*here*) at 20 per cent. Query, will he get it again ?

Who knows ?

P. B. Shelley to Byron

PISA, July 16th, 1821.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—I had some hopes that it was possible you would have paid me a visit in my seclusion among these chestnut forests this summer ; but your silence tells me not to expect you. This disappointment almost tempts me to think of invading you for a week or so in the autumn at Ravenna, and to overcome my nervous vis inertiae. Are you sure a visit would not annoy you ?

I have not been able to procure any of your late publications—neither the Tragedy, nor the Letter, nor the "Prophecy of Dante" ; and my anxiety to see them is very great. If you should have any copies of them, you would do me a great favour by sending them me by the post—a favour I would not ask if I could obtain them in any other manner. I send you—as Diomed gave Glaucus his brazen arms for those of gold —some verses I wrote on the death of Keats—

Bust of Byron by Thorwaldsen.

written, indeed, immediately after the arrival of the news.¹ Although I feel the truth of what I have alleged about his “Hyperion,” and I doubt, if you saw that particular poem, whether you would not agree with me ; yet I need not be told that I have been carried too far by the enthusiasm of the moment ; by my piety, and my indignation, in panegyric. But if I have erred, I console myself by reflecting that it is in defence of the weak—not in conjunction with the powerful. And perhaps I have erred from the narrow view of considering Keats rather as he surpassed *me* in particular, than as he was inferior to others : so subtle is the principle of self ! I have been unwillingly, and in spite of myself, induced to notice the attack of the *Quarterly* upon me ; it would have been affectation to have omitted the few words in which I allude to it. I have sought *not* to qualify the contempt from which my silence has hitherto sprung—and at the same time to prevent any paper war, as it regards my case ; which, averse as I am from all wars, is the only one which I should unconditionally avoid. I have had some correspondence with Southey on the subject, who denies that he is the author of the article upon the “Revolt of Islam” ; and I learn that it lies between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Mr. Gifford.² There for the present it rests. As to the Poem I send you, I fear it is worth little. Heaven knows what makes me persevere (after the severe reproof of public neglect) in writing verses ; and Heaven alone, whose will I execute so awkwardly, is responsible for my presumption.

I have this moment received, and shall have dispatched by this post the bulletin for Clare. I am delighted to see my little friend’s hand-writing. I feel more and more strongly the wisdom of your firmness on this subject ; and I applaud it the more because I know how weak I should have been in your case, and I see most clearly all the evils that would have sprung

¹ Shelley’s *Adonais*, printed at Pisa.

² The Review of the *Revolt of Islam*, Q. R., No. 42, was by John T. Coleridge, and was published in September 1819.

from weakness. Allegra's happiness depends upon your perseverance.

I still feel impressed with the persuasion that you *ought*—and if there is prophecy in hope, that you *will* write a great and connected poem, which shall bear the same relation to this age as the “*Iliad*,” the “*Divina Commedia*,” and “*Paradise Lost*” did to theirs; not that you will imitate the structure, or borrow from the subjects, of any of these, or in any degree assume them as your models. You know the enthusiasm of my admiration for what you have already done; but these are “*disjecti membra poetæ*” to what you may do, and will never, like that, place your memory on a level with those great poets. Such is an ambition (excuse the baseness of the word) alone worthy of you. You say that you feel indifferent to the stimuli of life. But this is a good rather than an evil augury. Long after the *man* is dead, the immortal spirit may survive, and speak like one belonging to a higher world. But I shall talk bombast, when I mean only to tell a plain truth in plain words.

Mary desires her kindest remembrances, and I am,
my dear Lord Byron,

Yours faithfully and affectionately,
PERCY B. SHELLEY.

On 7 Aug. 1821 Shelley paid his long-promised visit to Byron at Ravenna. In the course of conversation during the first night of their meeting, Byron showed Shelley the following letter from Hoppner, which he had received eleven months previously.

R. B. Hoppner to Byron

VENICE, September 16th, 1820.

MY DEAR LORD,—Notwithstanding Fossati's¹ Quixotism I am persuaded that either he or the Tribunal

¹ One of Byron's tradesmen, named Merryweather, had cheated him. An action was brought and the culprit was imprisoned, but was soon released by Byron's intervention. Fossati was Byron's lawyer and Castelli Merryweather's. See *Letters and Journals*, v. 388.

is wrong: for surely when a creditor has once confined his debtor if he chooses to let him loose again he can have no further claim upon him: at least for the debt for which he was confined—but apropos of this affair Castelli, who it appears has a particular partiality to your money, called here yesterday with a bill for something—Heaven knows what! which he says he did subsequently to Merryweather's confinement. Having no funds I, of course, referred him to y^r Lordship, and I hope you will be able to make him understand that he has been amply paid already. Happening to meet Missaglia yesterday after I had received your letter,¹ I enquired of him respecting the means of drawing on you at Ravenna, when he told me that he had written to you on the subject of some money he was to obtain from you, and recommended me to request you would have the goodness to take the same means and opportunity of sending the sum for which I wanted to draw. What those means and opportunity are I do not quite comprehend, but if they are such as you can avail yourself of without much trouble, I shall trust to your goodness to do so. You are surprised, and with reason, at the change of my opinion respecting Shiloe²: it certainly is not that which I once entertained of him: but if I disclose to you my fearful secret, I trust, for his unfortunate wife's sake, if not out of regard to Mrs. Hoppner and me, that you will not let the Shelleys know that we are acquainted with it. This request you will find so reasonable that I am sure you will comply with it, and I therefore proceed to divulge to you, what indeed on Allegra's account it is necessary that you should know, as it will fortify you in the good resolution you have already taken never to trust her again to her mother's care.

¹ Dated 10 Sept. 1820. See *Letters*, v. 73–5.

² *Ibid.* Shiloh is Shelley. Byron had written to Hoppner: “I regret that you have such a bad opinion of Shiloh; you used to have a good one. Surely he has talent and honour, but is crazy against religion and morality. . . . You seem lately to have got some notion against him.”

You must know then that at the time the Shelleys were here Clare was with child by Shelley : you may remember to have heard that she was constantly unwell, and under the care of a Physician, and I am uncharitable enough to believe that the quantity of medicine she then took was not for the mere purpose of restoring her health. I perceive too why she preferred remaining alone at Este, notwithstanding her fear of ghosts and robbers, to being here with the Shelleys. Be this as it may, they proceeded from here to Naples, where one night Shelley was called up to see Clara who was very ill. His wife, naturally, thought it very strange that he should be sent for ; but although she was not aware of the nature of the connexion between them, she had had sufficient proof of Shelley's indifference, and of Clara's hatred for her : besides as Shelley desired her to remain quiet she did not dare to interfere. A Mid-wife was sent for, and the worthy pair, who had made no preparation for the reception of the unfortunate being she was bringing into the world, bribed the woman to carry it to the Pietà, where the child was taken half an hour after its birth, being obliged likewise to purchase the physician's silence with a considerable sum. During all the time of her confinement Mrs. Shelley, who expressed great anxiety on her account, was not allowed to approach her, and these beasts, instead of requiting her uneasiness on Clara's account by at least a few expressions of kindness, have since increased in their hatred of her, behaving to her in the most brutal manner, and Clara doing everything she can to engage her husband to abandon her. Poor Mrs. Shelley, whatever suspicions she may entertain of the nature of their connexion, knows nothing of their adventure at Naples, and as the knowledge of it could only add to her misery, 'tis as well that she should not. This account we had from Elise,¹ who passed here this summer with an English lady who spoke very highly of

¹ Elise Foggi, who had acted as nurse to Allegra and the Shelleys' children, and went with Allegra to Venice in 1818. See *Letters and Journals*, v. 74.

her. She likewise told us that Clara does not scruple to tell Mrs. Shelley she wishes her dead, and to say to Shelley in her presence that she wonders how he can live with such a creature. Thus you see that your expression with regard to her is *even too delicate*; and I think with you, not only that she is a — — —, but any thing worse even that you can say of her. I hope this account will encourage you to persevere in your kind attentions to poor little Allegra, who has no-one else to look up to. I cannot conceive what Clara can mean by her impertinence to you. She ought to be too happy to reflect that the child is so well taken care of. Mrs. Hoppner was so angry when she heard the above account that it was with difficulty she was prevailed upon not to write to the Shelleys and upbraid them with their infamous conduct. However, as this could have been productive of no good, it was better to leave them to themselves, the more particularly as she had already written to decline interfering in the affair of her child, and there was every probability of our not being troubled any more with them. Besides that, in pity for the unfortunate Mrs. Shelley, whose situation would only have been rendered worse by the exposure, silence on these matters was still more incumbent on her. I think after this account you will no longer wonder that I have a bad opinion of Shelley. His talents I acknowledge: but I cannot concur that a man can be, as you say, “crazy against morality,” and have honour. I have heard of honour among thieves, but there it means only interest, and though it may be to Shelley’s interest to cut as respectable a figure as he can with the opinions he publicly professes, it is clear to me that honour does not direct any one of his actions. I fear my letter is written in a very incoherent style, but as I really cannot bring myself to go over this disgusting subject a second time; I hope you will endeavour to comprehend it, as it stands.

You say nothing of the newspapers which I requested of you in my last. If you were not a Peer, and I a

Consul, I should say, I think it quite clear there is very little intention of doing the Queen justice. Giustiziare, not Giudicare, appears to me too evidently the purpose of those who have brought her to trial.

Adieu, my dear Lord.

Believe me,

Ever your faithful Servant, R. B. HOPPNER.

Byron replied to this letter on 1 Oct. 1820.¹

Byron to R. B. Hoppner

MY DEAR HOPPNER,—Your letters and papers came very safely, though slowly, missing one post. The Shiloh story is true no doubt, though Elise is but a sort of *Queen's evidence*. You remember how eager she was to return to them, and then she goes away and abuses them. Of the facts, however, there can be little doubt; it is just like them. You may be sure that I keep your counsel. . . . I enclose an epistle from Shiloh.²

Yours ever and truly, BYRON.

On 8 Aug. 1821 Shelley, who had been shocked by the disclosure of Elise Foggi's infamous libel, wrote to his wife and explained the situation.

"Lord Byron," he writes, "has told me of a circumstance that shocks me exceedingly, because it exhibits a degree of desperate and wicked malice, for which I am at a loss to account. . . . It seems that Elise, actuated either by some inconceivable malice for our dismissing her, or bribed by my enemies, or making common cause with her infamous husband, has persuaded the Hopplers of a story so monstrous and incredible that they must have been prone to believe any evil to have believed such assertions upon such

¹ This letter was printed, v. 87, in *Byron's Letters*.

² Probably the letter dated 17 Sept. 1820, printed in Appendix I. vol. v (*ibid.*).

evidence. Mr. Hoppner wrote to Lord Byron to state this story as the reason why he declined any further communications with us, and why he advised him to do the same. Elise says that Clare was my mistress. . . . She then proceeds to say that Clare was with child by me ; that I gave her the most violent medicine to procure abortion ; that this not succeeding she was brought to bed, and that I immediately tore the child from her and sent it to the Foundling Hospital—I quote Mr. Hoppner's words—and this is stated to have taken place in the winter after we left Este. In addition she says that both I and Clare treated *you* in the most shameful manner ; that I neglected and beat you, and that Clare never let a day pass without offering you insults of the most violent kind, in which she was abetted by me. . . . You should write to the Hoppners a letter refuting the charge, in case you believe, and know, and can prove that it is false, stating the grounds and proofs of your belief. . . . If you will send the letter to me here, I will forward it to the Hoppners. . . .¹

Immediately upon receipt of Shelley's letter, Mary Shelley wrote the following appeal to Mrs. Hoppner.

It may be as well to state that an imperfect version of this letter was printed in Professor Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, and also in Mrs. Julian Marshall's *Life and Letters of Mary Shelley*. In both transcripts there are many significant omissions. It will be noticed that here, for the first time, Clare's illness at Naples, to which Shelley alludes in his letter to Mary, and which Shelley's biographers have omitted from their versions, is recorded. The following is an exact copy of the holograph letter which Shelley left in Lord Byron's hands, and which was found among his papers after his death.

¹ The letter is printed in full in Professor Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, ii. 423.

PISA, *August 11, 1821.*

MY DEAR MRS. HOPPNER,—After a silence of nearly two years I address you again, and most bitterly do. I regret the occasion on which I now write. Pardon me that I do not write in French ; you understand English well, and I am too much impressed to shackle myself in a foreign language ; even in my own my thoughts far outrun my pen, so that I can hardly form the letters. I write to defend him to whom I have the happiness to be united, whom I love and esteem beyond all creatures, from the foulest calumnies ; and to you I write this, who were so kind [and] to Mr. Hoppner; to both of whom I indulged the pleasing idea that I have every reason to feel gratitude. This is indeed a painful task.

Shelley is at present on a visit to Lord Byron at Ravenna, and I received a letter from him to-day containing accounts that make my hand tremble so much that I can hardly hold the pen. It tells me that Elise wrote to you relating the most hideous stories against him, and that you have believed them. Before I speak of these falsehoods permit [me] to say a few words concerning this miserable girl. You well know that she formed an attachment with Paolo when we proceeded to Rome, and at Naples their marriage was talked of. We all tried to dissuade her ; we knew Paolo to be a rascal, and we thought so well of her that we believed him to be unworthy of her. An accident led me to the knowledge that without marrying they had formed a connexion ; she was ill, we sent for a doctor who said there was danger of a miscarriage. I would not turn the girl on the world without in some degree binding her to this man. We had them married at Sir W. A'Court's—she left us ; turned Catholic at Rome, married him, and then went to Florence. After the disastrous death of my child we came to Tuscany. We have seen little of them ; but we have had knowledge that Paolo has formed a scheme of extorting money from Shelley by false accusations—

he has written him threatening letters, saying that he w^d be the ruin of him, &c. We placed these in the hands of a celebrated lawyer here who has done what he can to silence him. Elise has never interfered in this, and indeed the other day I received a letter from her, entreating with great professions of love that I would send her money. I took no notice of this; but although I knew her to be in evil hands, I would not believe that she was wicked enough to join in his plans without proof.

And now I come to her accusations—and I must indeed summon all my courage while I transcribe them; for tears will force their way, and how can it be otherwise? You knew Shelley, you saw his face, and could you believe them? Believe them only on the testimony of a girl whom you despised? I had hopes that such a thing was impossible, and that although strangers might believe the calumnies that this man propagated, none who had ever seen my husband could for a moment credit them.

She says Clare was Shelley's mistress, that—upon my word, I solemnly assure you that I cannot write the words, I send you a part of Shelley's letter that you may see what I am now about to refute—but I had rather die that [*sic*] copy anything so vilely, so wickedly false, so beyond all imagination fiendish.

I am perfectly convinced in my own mind that Shelley never had an improper connexion with Clare—at the time specified in Elise's letter, the winter after we quitted Este, I suppose while she was with us, and that was at Naples, we lived in lodgings where I had momentary entrance into every room, and such a thing could not have passed unknown to me. The malice of the girl is beyond all thought—I now remember that Clare did keep her bed there for two days—but I attended on her—I saw the physician—her illness was one that she had been accustomed to for years—and the same remedies were employed as I had before ministered to her in England.

Clare had no child—the rest must be false—but

that you should believe it—that my beloved Shelley should stand thus slandered in your minds—he the gentlest and most humane of creatures, is more painful to me, oh far more painful than any words can express.

It is all a lie—Clare is timid; she always showed respect even for me—poor dear girl! She has some faults—you know them as well as I—but her heart is good, and if ever we quarrelled, which was seldom, it was I, and not she, that was harsh, and our instantaneous reconciliations were sincere and affectionate.

Need I say that the union between my husband and myself has ever been undisturbed. Love caused our first imprudence, love which improved by esteem, a perfect trust one in the other, a confidence and affection which, visited as we have been by severe calamities (have we not lost two children?) has encreased [sic] daily, and knows no bounds.

I will add that Clare has been separated from us for about a year. She lives with a respectable German family at Florence. The reasons of this were obvious —her connexion with us made her manifest as the Miss Clairmont, the mother of Allegra—besides we live much alone—she enters much into society there—and solely occupied with the idea of the welfare of her child, she wished to appear such that she may not be thought in aftertimes to be unworthy of fulfilling the maternal duties. You ought to have paused before you tried to convince the father of her child of such unheard-of atrocities on her part. If his generosity and knowledge of the world had not made him reject the slander with the ridicule it deserved what irretrievable mischief you would have occasioned her!

Those who know me will believe my simple word—it is not long ago that my father said in a letter to me, that he had never known me to utter a falsehood—but you, easy as you have been to credit evil, who may be more deaf to truth—to you I swear—by all that I hold sacred upon heaven and earth by a vow which

I should die to write if I affirmed a falsehood—I swear by the life of my child, by my blessed and beloved child, that I know these accusations to be false.

Shelley is as incapable of cruelty as the softest woman. To those who know him his humanity is almost as a proverb. He has been unfortunate as a father, the laws of his country and death has [*sic*] cut him off from his dearest hopes. But his enemies have done him incredible mischief—but that you should believe such a tale coming from such a hand, is beyond all belief, a blow quite unexpected, and the very idea of it beyond words shocking.

But I have said enough to convince you, and are you not convinced? are not my words the words of truth? Repair, I conjure you, the evil you have done by retracting your confidence in one so vile as Elise, and by writing to me that you now reject as false every circumstance of her infamous tale.

You were kind to us, and I shall never forget it; now I require justice; you must believe me, I solemnly entreat [*sic*] you, the justice to confess that you do so.

MARY W. SHELLEY.

I send this letter to Shelley at Ravenna, that he may see it. For although I ought, the subject is too odious to me to copy it. I wish also that Lord Byron should see it. He gave no credit to the tale, but it is as well that he should see how entirely fabulous it is.

On 16 Aug., Shelley writes to Mary Shelley from Ravenna:

“I have received your letter, with that to Mrs. Hoppner. I do not wonder, my dearest friend, that you should have been moved with the infernal accusation of Elise. I was at first, but I speedily regained the indifference which the opinion of anything or anybody, except our own consciousness, amply merits, and day by day shall more receive from me. I have not recopied your letter; . . . but have given it to Lord

Byron, who has engaged to send it with his own comments to the Hoppners. People do not hesitate, it seems, to make themselves panders and accomplices to slander, for the Hoppners had exacted from Lord Byron that these accusations should be concealed from me. Lord Byron is not a man to keep a secret, good or bad ; but in openly confessing that he has not done so, he must observe a certain delicacy, and therefore wishes to send the letter himself."

Professor Dowden, who prints Shelley's letter in his *Life of Shelley*,¹ adds the following, by way of comment :

" Mary's letter of vindication, entrusted to Byron under a pledge that he would forward it to the Hoppners, did not pass out of his hands, and was found among papers of his after his death. It remains with us, however, to effect Mary's purpose in a larger sense than she had conceived, and to witness against the baseness of the man who thought to spare his own vanity at the cost of the honour of his friend."

Mrs. Julian Marshall, in her *Letters of Mary Shelley*,² writes in the same strain, following Professor Dowden's lead in every particular. Mr. Buxton Forman, in a Note to Medwin's *Revised Life of Shelley*,³ which he edited in 1913, states that Byron " does not come out of the affair well." Mary Shelley, he says, " wrote fully to Mrs. Hoppner, demanding a retraction of the wicked slander that lady had been circulating ; but no answer ever reached Mary for the very good reason (or very evil reason) that Byron, having undertaken to put the letter in Mrs. Hoppner's hands, took no steps for its delivery. It was found among his papers after his death." Mr. Forman goes on to explain Byron's motive for what he gratuitously calls " a

¹ ii, 428,

² i, 306.

³ p. 323.

base betrayal" by insinuating that Byron himself was the original author of the libel.

The matter cannot be allowed to rest upon a mere assumption that Byron betrayed a trust. The justice for which Mary Shelley pleaded in her letter to Mrs. Hoppner should be extended to Byron.

The accusation against Shelley, as we have seen, had its origin in Hoppner's letter to Byron dated 16 Sept. 1820. This letter is now printed for the first time. Nothing could be plainer than the accusation which Hoppner believed on the testimony of his informant, Elise Foggi, who was formerly in the service of the Shelleys. The value of that woman's evidence may be gauged by a letter which she wrote in the following year to Mary Shelley, and to Mrs. Hoppner herself.

Elise Foggi to Mrs. Shelley¹

FLORENCE, 12 Avril, 1822.

CHÈRE MADAME,—Ayant rencontré Mademoiselle dans une maison ici à Florence j'ai été très chagrine quand elle me accusée devoir dit des horreurs d'elle à Madame Hoppner, elle me dit aussi que vous et Monsieur étaient tous les deux fachée contre moi à cause de cese : je vous assure, ma chère Madame Shelley, que vous pouvez croire ma parole d'honneur que je n'ai jamais dit à Madame Hoppner, ni contre vous, ni contre Mademoiselle, ni contre Monsieur, et de quelque part que cela viene, c'est un mensonge contre moi. J'espère, ma chère Madame, que vous voulez bien me prendre votre amitié que je vous repête encore une seconde fois que je vous envoie une lettre pour Madame Hoppner, comme Mademoiselle me dit que vous désirez que je lui écris. Je suis votre très devoué et affectionné,

ELISE FOGGI.

¹ *Shelley and Mary*, ii. 786, 787 [privately circulated, 1882].

The letter enclosed ran as follows :

Elise Foggi to Mrs. Hoppner

FLORENCE, 12 Avril, 1822.

MADAME,—J'étais extrement étonnée d'entendre que vous avez dit, ou écrits à Monsieur mi-lord des horreurs contre Mademoiselle Clairmont ; je vous prie Madame de me rendre justice auprès de Madame Shelley, qui est très fâché contre moi : cet comme je puis déclarer avec la plus grande certitude que j'ai jamais rien veuz dans la conduite de Mademoiselle qui pouvait autoriser le moindre que pervers. J'espère Madame que vous me rendrez justice a ce point. Je suis votre devoué servante,

ELISE FOGGI.

There cannot, in the face of the letters here given, be the slightest doubt of Shelley's innocence, and I am confident that all candid and reasonable persons will be of that opinion.

So far good. But Byron's conduct in this affair has been impugned by all Shelley's biographers. While admitting that there is no positive proof that Byron did send Mary Shelley's letter to Mrs. Hoppner, there is, on the other hand, no positive proof that he did not do so. This has long been a *vexata quæstio*. In these circumstances it is but right and proper, and in accordance with one of the soundest maxims of British law, to give the accused full benefit of the doubt. There is a good deal to be said in Byron's defence.

It is clear from the letters before us that Mary Shelley sent her letter to Shelley unsealed, with a request that he would copy it, and read it to Lord Byron. We know that Mary's letter was not copied by Shelley ; and we also know that its contents were read by Byron. It was then sealed, and was handed to Byron, who prom-

ised to forward it to the Hoppners with an explanatory letter from himself. Mary Shelley's holograph letter lies before us. On it is Shelley's seal in red wax, but the seal is broken, and at the top of that seal there is a drop of black sealing-wax, with a scrap of paper attached to it. This had evidently become detached from its envelope in removal. Shelley's seal has been pressed flat on its outer rim, as though crushed in the act of sealing the covering letter. The address, written in Mary's hand, is simply :

“ A Madame
Mad^me Hoppner.”

There is no address. This proves that if it reached its destination it must have been conveyed under a separate cover. Shelley's biographers declare upon evidence which satisfied a too willing credulity that the letter never reached Mrs. Hoppner. The grounds of their argument being that the letter in question was found among Byron's papers after his death, and that, so far as they know, no reply to it ever reached Mary Shelley.

The present writer, for the following reasons, as firmly believes that the letter did reach Mrs. Hoppner, and that Byron forwarded it according to his promise. Shelley stated in distinct terms that the contents of Mary's letter were made known to Byron—it was almost certainly read by him. If so, we may ask who can have broken the seal of that letter? As Byron well knew its contents, there would have been no reason for him to do so. And yet, the seal is broken. By whom? By Hobhouse? By Lady Dorchester? Assuredly not.

The letter found among Byron's papers in 1824 was addressed, as we have stated, to Madame Hoppner

and sealed. Is it conceivable that such a man as Hobhouse—honorable, punctilious, and business-like as he was—would have tampered with the seal, and withheld that letter from the person to whom it was addressed ? Would he not have written to his friend Hoppner, who was at that time still British Consul at Venice ; would he not have told Hoppner that a sealed letter, addressed to his wife by Mary Shelley, was found among Byron's papers ? But, supposing that Hobhouse may have felt some delicacy in communicating with Hoppner, would he not have told Mary Shelley, who, as he knew, was at that time living not far distant, in lodgings at Kentish Town ?

There is but one reason, in our opinion, why Hobhouse did nothing in the matter. The letter which came into his hands as Byron's executor was, so to speak, an open letter, its seal broken. He was at liberty to read it, and having done so he probably concluded that the matter had been settled. In this matter we are in full accord with Lord Ernle, who thinks that the letter was sent, and at Byron's request returned to him. “ As the answer to a charge closely affecting the mother of Allegra, it is natural that Byron should have wished to keep the document.”¹

The assertion—if it is capable of proof—that Mary Shelley received neither letter nor message from Mrs. Hoppner in reply to her protest may be accounted for by a wish on Mrs. Hoppner's part not to be mixed up in an affair for which she was in no sense responsible. It was her husband who published the libel, and in the absence of the Hoppner papers, which we hope may some day come to light, there is nothing to guide us to a just conclusion as to her motive for silence.

We cannot leave this subject without expressing

¹ *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, v. 74.

surprise at the manner in which Professor Dowden has dealt with Mary Shelley's letter to Mrs. Hoppner. It is improbable that he ever saw the original, and if he did not the letter must have been copied by someone long ago. It may interest the reader to compare Professor Dowden's transcript with the copy here given from the holograph. In Professor Dowden's version three long and important paragraphs are omitted.

After that incident the close friendship between Byron and the Shelleys was continued at Pisa until Shelley's death. It is hardly conceivable that the subject of Hoppner's letter was never mentioned by them or that the intimacy would have continued if it had been known that Byron had not forwarded Mrs. Shelley's letter to Hoppner. When Mary Shelley met Mrs. Hoppner in Florence in 1843 she writes that she deliberately cut her.

R. B. Hoppner to Byron

[VENICE] September 27, 1820.

MY DEAR LORD,—I trouble you at present merely to enquire whether you received my letter of the Saturday before last. It contained some details of the [Shiloes (partially erased)] which I should be sorry were to travel about the world, or to fall into any other hands but yours.

I hope also you have received the newspapers. Our curiosity as to the result of this curious trial,¹ it appears, we must suspend for the next three weeks; the Queen's Advocate General having asked that time to prepare her defence. In the mean while it is certain She has not been idle, and we have lately had the son of the *feu* Lord Maire here to collect proofs of the falsehood of the witness who went from hence against her, in which he has been very successful. I am particu-

¹ Queen Caroline.

larly anxious that the shameful conduct of the Milan Commissioners should be exposed. It was their duty beyond all doubt, to ascertain whether there was any foundation for the charges which during the last six years have been circulated against the Queen. But, instead of doing this their only study appears to have been to find witnesses ready to swear to the truth of them. This, it appears to me quite clear, was not their duty in the first instance, and by adopting this line instead of the other more reasonable one, they have satisfied every one that the [word illegible] charge is a fabrication the web of which has been spun at Milan, or perhaps nearer home, they have disgraced their employers, and degraded themselves beyond all chance of recovery. In the meantime Nunký pays the piper ; and who are the rascals that profit by our beastly folly ? The advocate Vilmacarti I have been confidently assured has recently invested half a million of francs in land. Colonel Browne, who three years ago had not a half-penny besides his half-pay as Major, now drives four-in-hand about the streets of Milan ; and the wretches they have raked together have pocketed our pence and laugh at our credulity. And yet these men, at least one of them, we are told, are as respectable agents as any to be met with. [Word erased] is as respectable as those who instead of pointing out to these agents the error of their proceedings have delighted to wallow with them in the mud they have collected.

I cannot help thinking the Solicitor General's Speech a very weak one. He says Majocchi's name¹ alone carries conviction with it. What magic there is in this name I cannot pretend to divine ; for my part I think no person can read his depositions without being convinced that he is an infamous scoundrel ; and the few Italians with whom I have conversed on the subject agree with me in the belief that if he were

¹ At the trial of Queen Caroline, the answer *Non mi ricordo* was so frequently made by Majocchi that it became a cant phrase of the day.

offered half what he has received to swear against the Queen, to deny his assertions, he would make no difficulty in doing so. But, as I have no right to bore you with my remarks unasked on this question, I shall conclude as I began, begging you will let me know whether you receive my letters, and assuring you that I remain

Your faithful Servant [R. B. HOPPNER].

I can't help thinking the depositions a famous subject for a few epigrams, and have tried my hand at one :

“ Since Majocchi's a name, the Solicitor Swears
The magic of which should convince us ;
Combined with Demon 'tis no wonder one hears
He trusted to jockey the Princess.”

Byron to Kinnaird

RAVENNA, August 10th, 1821.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—Murray has behaved very handsomely to Moore about the memoirs or memoranda, as you may know by this time.¹

I wrote to you lately ; pray let me have my *fee*, and let me know what you think to ax Murray for the MSS. His good conduct to Moore has almost reconciled me to him again.

My respects to Hobhouse and all friends.

Yours, in haste, and ever truly, B.

¹ In October 1819 Byron gave Moore his *Life* in MS.—seventy-eight folio sheets—brought down to 1816. This was placed in Moore's hands for safe keeping, and was not to be published during Byron's lifetime. These memoranda were subsequently increased by instalments up to Dec. 1820. In July 1821 Moore, being at that time much in need of money, applied to Murray for a loan of 2,000 guineas, and gave, with Byron's approval, to Murray the whole MS. as security for the loan. A bond was drawn up between them in which it was stipulated that Murray should have the right of publishing the *Life* in the event of Moore not having repaid the loan within three months of Byron's death. (Full particulars are given in *Memoirs of John Murray*, i. 442-9.) On 17 May 1824 the whole MS. was burned at 50 Albemarle Street.

RAVENNA, *September 4th, 1821.*

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I intend to dedicate the “two Foscari’s” to Walter Scott, “Sardanapalus” to Goethe, and “Faliero” to you. The two first I have sent to Murray; your own I enclose to *you*, that you may see it first, and accept it or not. If content, send it to Murray.

You are a good German Scholar, I am not even a bad one, but would feel greatly obliged if you would write two lines to the “Grosser Mann”¹ at my request to tell him my intent, and ask his leave. See the inscription at Murray’s; it goes by this post.

Yrs. ever, B.

RAVENNA, *September 13th, 1821.*

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—It is odd that Murray has not shown you the Foscari’s. Probably he is afraid that you should like it, and be a cause of raising the price. I have corrected the proofs; returned them to England; and refused an offer he made me.

By Tuesday’s post I sent him another tragedy on the subject of “Cain,” but in the Manfred and metaphysical style. Desire him to let you see it as soon as you can. Also the Foscari’s. You must really pursue him.

“As when a Gryphon in the wilderness
Follows an Arimaspi.”

Follow the Arimaspi Murray, who seems as reluctant to part with “gold” as the rest of his nation.² He

¹ Goethe.

² Arimaspians were, according to Herodotus, a one-eyed people of Scythia who adorned their hair with gold. As gold-mines were guarded by gryphons, there were perpetual contentions between them. Byron quotes Milton (*Paradise Lost*) from memory. The correct version is:

“As when a gryphon thro’ the wilderness
With winged course, o’er hill and moory dale,
Pursues the Arimaspi, who, by stealth,
Had from his wakeful custody purloined
The guarded gold.”

But in this case it would appear that Murray was not the Arimaspi, but the Gryphon.

has been shuffling and trying to make a bargain with me apart from your knowledge, which shan't be.

If Claughton has paid Hanson, let Hanson pay the money into your bank.

Claughton's money should go to the creditors. You must dun Sir Jacob,¹ an old fellow with thousands a year, and the Noel estate too (which ought to have been mine), demurring to pay a hundred pound or two ! It can't be, and it shan't be ; it is shabby, scabby, scrubby, and must not be permitted.

I have seen nothing in the papers of his [Hanson's] mismanagement of the Portsmouth estates, but it is a great disadvantage to me to have such a solicitor.² However, he was made so when I was ten years old, and I have no help for it. In case of taxing his bill, all these little things would weigh with the taxers thereof (i.e. the Portsmouth mis-managements, &c.) and with a jury in case of an appeal to one.

Kean is right to act De Montfort. I prayed him to do so a hundred times in 1815. But I will have nothing to do with the Doge ; why should he act it ? I did not, and do not write for the stage ; and would not alter a line, to draw down the upper gallery into the pit in thunder, if it could be so.

You are a fine fellow, and my zealous friend and ally, also a very good judge of dramatic effect, but surely the past experience shows that in the present state of the English stage, no production of mine can be adapted to an audience.

How is Hobhouse ? better I hope, tell me so.

Yours ever and affectionately, BYRON.

P.S. Murray, by system for some time, avoids letting me have any favourable news in *his* line. For instance, I learned from an Englishman, that notwithstanding the *row*, the popularity and sale of the *two first Juans* had been excessive. Of all this he told me nothing. Of the new cantos I only know that he published them

¹ Sir Ralph Milbanke.

² Lord Portsmouth had married Hanson's daughter.

in a disparaging way, and they are printed in so slovenly a manner with regard to *printer's errors*, that no wonder if they don't succeed, but as yet I hear nothing whether they succeed or not. There is poetry in them though, though I say it.

P. B. Shelley to Byron

[PISA, circa September 1821.]

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—I have taken your house for 400 crowns a year, and signed the compact on your part; so we are now secure.¹ I have as yet bought nothing, guiding myself in that respect by the instructions of the Gambas, who advise me to hear from you, or to wait for Lega before I do anything. They are very much pleased with the house, the Contessa especially delighted.

You must pass by Barberini to avoid Florence. If you enquire *two posts* on that side of Florence, the people will indicate the road. You come out on the Pisa road about ten miles on the other side of Florence.

Pray send me explicit instructions as to what ought to be done about furnishing, &c., the Palace Lanfranchi. I have money enough here, so you need not trouble yourself to restrict me on that head. I am looking out for additional stables, and shall soon have found them.

I put off writing this letter till I got to Pisa, and now I have only time to end.

Ever faithfully yours, P. B. SHELLEY.

PISA, September 14th, 1821.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—The moment I received your last letter, I proceeded to send off, at the lowest possible price I could get, eight waggons, &c.² The Signor Pietro did the same, and the equivoque would

¹ Palazzo Lanfranchi, on the Lung Arno at Pisa. Rent 200 zecchini, about £90 per annum. Unfurnished, six months rent to be paid in advance.

² This was for transport of Byron's effects from Ravenna to Pisa.

have sent sixteen instead of eight waggons to Ravenna, if the same Providence that watches over the fall of a sparrow had not determined that my express should arrive in time at Florence to prevent the departure of the additional number, and save me (for I never should have had the conscience to charge you with the consequences of my bungling) a certain number of scudi. Now, however, all is right, and I hope that before this your caravan will be upon its march.

I have not bought any furniture—the Gambas think we had better wait for your or for Lega's arrival, as you do not give any special instructions on this point.

Horace Smith, whom I expected in Tuscany this autumn, is detained in Paris by the illness of his wife. I have not yet heard from Hunt. My convent friend, after a great deal of tumult, &c., is at length married, and is watched by her brother-in-law with great assiduity. This whole affair has taught me to believe that convents may be well enough for young children, but that they are the worst possible places for them as soon as they begin to be susceptible of certain impressions. They have made a great fuss at Pisa about my intimacy with this lady.¹ Pray do not mention anything of what I told you; as the whole truth is not known and Mary might be very much annoyed at it. "Don Juan," Cantos 3, 4, and 5, I see are just republished in Paris. I have written for them, but they are not yet arrived. I hear from all sides the most enthusiastic praises of "Marino Faliero"; and from one person in particular, a professed critic, [who] is in raptures with the "Prophecy of Dante." The poetry of this piece is indeed sublime; and if it have not general admiration, you ought still to be contented; because the subject, no less than the style, is addressed to the few, and, like some of the highest passages in "Childe Harold," will only be *fully* appreciated by the select readers of many generations. But "Don Juan" is your great victory over the

¹ Emilia Viviani.

alleged inflexibility of your powers ; and interest must be made to take an embargo off such precious merchandise. I have seen the Countess frequently,¹ and I pronounce you secure against any of my female friends here. I will trust you with Mrs. W.²

Have you formed any plan for Allegra here ? It would be very easy to find a proper place for her in this part of the world ; and if you would be inclined to trust to my recommendation, I would of course engage that Clare should not interfere with any plan that you might lay down. Of course, after my experience, I cannot say much in favour of convents ; but respectable private families might be found who would undertake the care of her. I speak freely on this subject, because I am sure you have seen enough to convince you that the impressions, which the Hoppners wished to give you of myself and Mary, are void of foundation.

I hope soon to see you. If Lega comes first, I will give him all the assistance, and information I can. The Gambas will tell him where to find me.

Believe me, my dear Lord B.,

Yours very faithfully, P. B. S.

Fragment to Mr. Hobhouse, London post-mark October 16th, 1821

[RAVENNA.]

P.S. I have just received a very inconsistent epistle from our friend Douglas K. Now all I ask is that he will not write contradictions of *himself* every two months.

Could you without trouble rummage out from my papers the first (or half) act of tragedy that I began in 1815, called "*Werner*." Make Murray cut out "the German's tale" in Lee's Canterbury tales (the subject of the drama), and send me both by the post. They will come in a letter, like the proofs.

I am determined to make a struggle for the more regular drama, without encouragement ; for Murray and his synod do nothing but throw cold water on what

¹ Teresa Guiccioli.

² Jane Williams.

I have done hitherto. But they may be damned for aught that I mind them.

On the 11th inst. I sent a "Manfred" sort of thing called "Cain." Has he shown it to you?

Of course I write for the reader, and not for the stage, so no need of "Mr. Upton."¹

I have also sent him letter (enclosed to Ds. K.) requesting him to send me no more reviews either of *praise* or censure, nor opinions of any sort from him, or his friends. The fact is, that they irritate and take off one's attention, which may be better employed than in listening to either libels or flattery. I have begged this of him, under pains and penalties of another "English Bards &c." My bile would easily make chyle of him and his in such a production, if they don't let me alone; or at least keep me in ignorance, of their prate. Let them chatter or scribble, so that I neither hear, nor see them; which is not likely here, unless they send on purpose.

Byron to Hobhouse

October 12th, 1821.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I had written already to ask "Mr. Nisby what he thought of the Grand Vizier," and of the Greeks, our old acquaintances.

I think you have given Bowles his gruel with your parody on Savage, which is certainly much better than his parody on the *legitimate* Savage (I once saw somewhere a parallel between us), and must have put him into a fine tantrum. As for "Argument" "I never dispute your talents in making a Goose pye, Mrs. Primrose, so pray leave argument to me."²

As to the printers' errors,—Oons! what do you think of "Adriatic side of the Bosphorus,"—of "*praise*" for

¹ Upton wrote songs for Astley's Hippodrome.

"For Astley's Circus Upton writes
And also for the Surrey."

(Byron, in a letter to Murray, 11 April 1818.)

² Deborah Primrose—*Vicar of Wakefield*.

"pair"—"precarious" for "precocious," and "case" for "chase." Mr. Murray has received a trimmer, I promise you, not without cause. Our friend Douglas has also been seducing me into mercantile contradictions, 1stly by writing letter after letter to convince me that M. never offered me *enough* for the past MSS., and then when I had refused what was really an *inadequate* offer, turning round upon me and desiring me to accept it! Now, as Croaker says, "plague take it, there must be a right and a wrong,"¹ and which is it? [Why] Douglas contradicted himself so suddenly I don't know. However, since that I have sent two more Poeshies to A[lbemarle] Street, "*Cain*" a tragedy in three acts, "*A Vision of Judgment*" by way of reversing rogue Southey's, in my finest, ferocious, Caravaggio style, and a *third* entitled "*the Irish Avatar*," upon the late Irishisms of the Blarney people in Dublin. All which I pray you to look at. I am mistaken if the *two* letters are not after your own radical heart.

Your infamous government will drive all honest men into the necessity of reversing it. I see nothing left for it but a republic *now*; an opinion which I have held aloof as long as it would let me. *Come* it must. *They* do not see this, but all this driving will do it, it may not be in ten or twenty years, but it is inevitable, and I am sorry for it.

When we read of the *beginnings* of revolutions in a *few* pages, it seems as if they had happened in *five* minutes; whereas *years* have always been, and must be their prologues; it took from eighty-eight to ninety-three, to decide the French one; and the English are a tardy people. I am so persuaded that an English one is inevitable, that I am moving Heaven and Earth (that is to say Douglas Kinnaird, and Medea's trustee) to get me out of the funds. I would give all I have to see the country *fairly free*, but till I know that *giving*, or rather *losing* it, *would free* it, you will excuse my natural anxiety for my temporal affairs.

¹ Oliver Goldsmith's *Good Natured Man*.

Still I can't approve of the ways of the radicals ; they seem such very low imitations of the Jacobins. I do not allude to you, and Burdett, but to the Major, and to Hunt of Bristol, and little Waddington, &c., &c.

If I came home (which I never shall) I should take a *decided* part in politics, with pen and person ; and (if I could revive my English) in the house ; but am not yet quite sure *what* part, except that it would *not* be in favour of these abominable tyrants.

I certainly lean towards a republic. All history and experience is in its favour, even the French ; for they butchered thousands of citizens at first, yet *more* were killed in any one of the great battles, than ever perished by a democratical proscription.

America is a model of force, and freedom, and moderation ; [in spite of] all the coarseness and rudeness of its people.

I have been thinking over what you say of Italian tragedy ; but have been rather surprised to find that I know very little about it ; and I have so little turn for that kind of disquisition, that I should only spoil your sager lucubrations. I believe I said as much in a former letter. You will make a better thing of it without me.

You enquire after my health. It is as usual ; but I am subject to great depression of spirits, occasionally without sufficient cause. Preserve yours.

Yours ever, B.

Byron left Ravenna on 30 Oct. 1821, and, after spending a day at Bologna with Rogers, crossed the Apennines with him ; stayed perhaps twenty-four hours at Florence and arrived at Pisa on 2 Nov.

Byron to Hobhouse

PISA, November 23rd, 1821.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I dare say your opinion about "Cain" is the right one, but as there are opposite opinions about it, and of sensible men too (for instance our friend's brother, Henry Matthews, the "invalid

traveller," and Moore, &c.), why, as Fielding said, "Damn them, let them find that out!" They (i.e. the public) *will* find it out, I dare say, fast enough; but I can't burn it; on the contrary, it must take its chance with the other two plays, or whatever they may be called.¹

I have no violent paternal feelings upon the subject, and as a proof of it, I write you this, not an hour after getting your letter. I know only *one* motive for publishing *anything* with a sensible man, and I think Johnson has already quoted that. As to Johnson and Pope, surely *your* admiration cannot surpass *mine* of them, and had they lived now, I would not have published a line of anything I have ever written. I thought I had expressed my opinion on such matters already in my letter upon Pope. But the volume with Murray must take its chance, because rhymes bring more than a *sheet of speech*, as the author says in "Andria," though I recollect now that he says the *reverse*, "the sheet of speech" *then* bringing more than "the rhymes."

With regard to "the Memoirs," I can only say that *Moore* acted entirely with *my approbation* in the whole transaction, and that *I* desire no profit whatever from it. Do you really mean to say, that *I* have not as good a right to leave such an MS. after my death, as the thousands before me who have done the same? Is there no *reason* that *I* should? Will not my life (it is egotism—but you know this is true of all men who have *had* a name even if they survive it), be given in a false and unfair point of view by others? I mean false as to *praise*, as well as *censure*. If you have any *personal* feelings upon it, I can say, as far as I recollect, that you are mentioned without anything that could annoy you; and if otherwise it shall be cut out.

This is all I can do about them, or indeed am disposed to do. Whatever blame there is, attaches to *me*,

¹ Burdett and I read the poem. I think it has scarce one specimen of real poetry or even musical numbers in it. . . . Some will call it blasphemous, and I think the whole world will finally agree in thinking it unworthy. *Recollections of a Long Life*, ii. 172.

and not to *Moore*, who merely acted upon my suggestion to him ; to whom the papers were left as a kind of legacy.

Excuse the haste of the scrawl, and believe me,
Ever and truly yours, B.

P.S. Pray write freely. I think we have both done so for many *years*, and I shall do so by *you* on the first opportunity, I mean of your works.

If you think a little, you must allow that there is nothing discreditable to *Moore* in selling “the Memoirs,” for he did it at *my* suggestion, and to me there *can* be none, for I neither have, nor would, accept a sixpence from the purchase. They are sold with the express stipulation of not being published during the writer’s lifetime.

I gave them to him *three years ago*,¹ and I desired him to sell them now, to help him out of his “Bermuda” scrape ; now it appears to me that there is nothing but what is honourable in the fact, and in the *motive*.

I shall conclude, as you are fond of “Johnson,” with a quotation from his life of Edmond Smith: “Pray, Rag, when were you drunk last ?”

Byron to Kinnaird

PISA, November 28th, 1821.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—Murray’s plea is that the *Juans* are *pirated*, but this is none with me, as it is his *own* fault. What business had he to affect not to put his name on the title page ?

I enclose you his letter, to prevent mistakes, for it is best to “deal by the card” in all matters of business. I sent him *three* copies of “Juan” per post, to *correct* him for not correcting them. But of these *I* will pay the postage of *two*, which deduct. I leave him to pay

¹ This may have been a slip of the pen ; if not, it would appear that Byron gave his memoirs to *Moore* in 1818. But, in writing to Murray 10 Dec. 1819 *Byron* says : “I sent home by *Moore* (*for Moore only*, who has my journal) my memoir written up to 1816.” *Moore*’s only visit to *Byron* took place in Oct. 1819. We must leave it there.

the other, as a warning to be more precise in printing another time.

I shall by no means be guided by *him*, about *not* publishing, except the three plays, this winter; on the contrary, I desire that the “*Pulci*,” in particular, be published, and the “*Vision*,” if not by him, by some other, but *separately*.

Last week, I wrote to you on occasion of a letter from Hobhouse, one of the grossest ever written in style and manner. Had it been by any but an old friend, I really think I must have, at the least, made such an answer, as would have produced a scene. As it was, I answered temperately.¹ I quoted to you *parts of his*, from which you may judge of the whole.

I write this merely to acknowledge yours.

Ever and truly, B.

P.S. What Sir Henry Halford or you say of Lady Noel is all very fine, but she is immortal, that you may depend on; an ill-tempered woman turned of seventy never dies, though they may be buried sometimes. Besides, my luck does not run in that family.

Byron to Hobhouse

PISA, December 16th, 1821.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I have waited several posts in the hope that you might perhaps stumble upon the papers I mentioned, the first act of a thing begun in 1815, called “*Werner*. ” If you can’t, it don’t much matter, only let me know it.

You will by this time, have received my very tem-

¹ Byron’s letter to Hobhouse to which this refers contained the following: “If you are anxious to know my opinion of the *style* of your letter, I refer you to Douglas Kinnaird, to whom I have written by this post upon the subject. You remind me of the new peer, quoted by Tom Shuffleton, who, ‘if a single knob is knocked out of his new coronet, will make me a *much sharper* speech than ever he will produce in *parliament*. ’”

But, as I once heard Fletcher observe, “being too often *chairman*, spoils a man’s manners.”

perate answer to your very tipsy letter. I forgive you as a Christian should do, that is, I never will forgive you as long as I live, and shall certainly pay you in kind, with interest, the very first opportunity ; but that need break no squares between us, as it hath been our custom for several years, the example being first set by yourself at Cambridge, and Brighton. “ Don’t you remember what happened seven years ago ? ”

Yours ever &c., B.

CHAPTER XII

PISA—GENOA

(1822)

THE Gamba family accompanied Lord Byron from Ravenna to Pisa, but all were kept under close Government supervision. Byron himself had joined the Carbonari. Hobhouse came out to Pisa on 5 September and remained till the 21st. In his *Recollections of a Long Life* he gives some interesting information concerning Byron at this time. “He told me that the Pisans disliked him because he would not associate with them and the professors of the University, and because he would not go to a ball given last Christmas. It seems Madame Guiccioli and her father and brother lived together in a house apart until the Gambas went to prepare Byron’s house at Genoa. This is Italian morality.” Count Gamba had been sent away from Pisa in consequence of the affair with the dragoon.

Again: “We had some talk about his liaison, which, it appears, he does not wish to continue. It induced him, however, to be one of the Carbonari.”

On 19 April Allegra, Byron’s daughter by Clare Clairmont, died¹—exactly two years before his own death. In May he went to Leghorn, but was back in Pisa in July, and in November was established with the Gambas and Madame Guiccioli in Genoa.²

¹ *Letters and Journals*, vi. 69.

² Madame Guiccioli’s account of Byron’s life at Pisa will be found in *Letters and Journals*, vi. 110–12.

He suffered much in health this year in consequence of a long swim in the “broiling sun and saline sea of August” at Via Reggio—his skin peeled off; and there are frequent references to his illness.

In July Shelley was drowned in his yacht *Ariel* off Lerici; his death is scarcely referred to in these letters, but full particulars will be found in *Letters and Journals*, vi. 108–10. He appointed Byron his executor, and left him a legacy of £2,000, which was not accepted.

In this year Byron became closely associated with the Hunts, to whom he gave much assistance both literary and pecuniary, but he was dissuaded by Hobhouse from taking a partnership in *The Liberal*. Hobhouse also tried to persuade him to write less. His principal literary work this year was the completion of *Werner*, the 6th, 7th, and 8th Cantos of *Don Juan*, and *The Deformed Transformed*.

Byron to Kinnaird

PISA, February 6th, 1822.¹

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—“Try back the deep line,” till we find a publisher for “The Vision,”² and if none such is to be found, print fifty copies (at *my expense*), distribute them amongst my acquaintances, and you will soon see that the booksellers *will* publish them, even if we opposed them. That they are now afraid is natural, but I do not see that I ought to give way on that account. I know nothing of Rivington’s remonstrance by the

¹ Extracts from this letter are printed in Moore’s *Life of Byron* (pp. 548–9) and reproduced in *Letters and Journals* (vi. 9–13). The whole letter is now given for the first time.

² After various delays and hesitations on the part of Murray, Byron handed over *The Vision of Judgment* to John Hunt, and it was published in the first number of his paper, *The Liberal*. The poem was much criticized, and in 1824 John Hunt was tried and found guilty of calumniating the late King, etc. See *Poetry*, iv. 478–9.

"eminent Churchman," but I suppose he wants a living. I only heard of a preacher at Kentish town against Cain. The same outcry was raised against Priestley, Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire, and all the men who ever dared put tithes to the question.

I wrote to you some time ago with, and about "The Deluge," and Werner (which I sent to Moore), and proposed Galignani as an experiment (always under submission to your judgment in business matters), recommending you to forward all in your hands, and all (unpublished) in Mr. Murray's hands (the translation from Pulci, &c., the Po, &c.), to Moore at Paris, 17, Rue d'Anjou, St. Honoré. Murray (who is, I suppose, heartily alarmed) will, I dare say, give them up (and the connection) very willingly. I have written (civilly but coldly) to advise him thereof.

What you say of Hobhouse I had already anticipated by writing to him a letter, which will settle the matter, and of course amicably. As to any quarrel between him and me¹ (unless preceded by some very gross overt act) I should look upon it as out of the question after our long, and not barren (on his part) friendship. But I was hurt, and the more so, as I have been ever very cautious in touching him up on literary matters.

For instance, on his row with Canning, on which perhaps I might have differed from him, I kept total silence, because I thought that I might annoy him. As to the ballad which he harps upon, *he* has written half a dozen at different times on me, and one I remember in which he quizzed both *you* and *me* (in 1816). Now, did *I* ever make words or fuss about it? It was the deliberate and wrothful seriousness of his criticism on the poem which vexed me, and the extreme unguardedness of his expressions. But it is over.²

¹ About the poem *My Boy Hobby O!*

² Southey's reply to Byron's attack in the Appendix to *The Two Foscari* appeared in *The Courier*, 5 Jan. 1822. (See Appendix I, vol. vi. "Letters.") See also *Conversations of Lord Byron*, by Medwin (i. 212-16).

I wish I was out of the funds for all your security, but I suppose I must bear the delay.

Yours ever and truly, B.

P.S. I have just got Southey's pretended reply, to which I am surprised that you do not allude. What remains to be done is to call him out. The question is, would he come ? for if he would not, the whole thing would appear ridiculous, if I were to take a long and expensive journey to no purpose.

You must be my second, and as such I wish to consult you. Respond.

I apply to you as one well versed in the duello—or monomachie. Of course I should come to England as privately as possible, and leave it (supposing I was the survivor) the same ; having no other object which could draw me to that country, except to settle quarrels accumulated during my absence.

PISA, February 17th, 1822.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I have long ago written to you (in 1818) that in case of mortality on y^e part of Lady Noel Sir Francis Burdett would be my selection as referee ; and I request you, with all respect, to propose to him the office. If he declines (which I hope that he will not), then Earl Grey.

The next business is my wish that you would *immediately insure* *Lady Byron's* life for me, for *ten thousand* pounds, or (if the expense seem too great to you) for *six thousand* pounds that, in case of her demise, as the *Marital* is only a *life* interest, there may be some provision to compensate for the diminution of income, and provide for my children, as you will observe that Lady B.'s daughter only takes in *default of male issue* by the Curzons and Shirleys. Do not neglect this, but act *immediately*. I will either repay you in your own circulars (all whilk arrived safely and welcomely), or you may deduct it from our next account. I shall be very uneasy till I hear that you have done this by next post ; as otherwise the whole prospect rests upon

the respiration of her Ladyship, and my children may be after all no great gainers.

With regard to the settlement of the property, I have named my referee, but I have no wish to press Sir Ralph or his offspring hard ; for example the Mansion-house (which rests in abeyance for the umpires in this boxing match to award to time) is no object to me living abroad, and with no wish to return to your agreeable country. I will waive any pretension to it, or take a moderate equivalent, whichever you think proper. I have no desire, but to act as a gentleman should do ; without any real enmity, or affected generosity towards those who have not set me a very violent example of forbearance.

Will you request Sir Francis Burdett to accept my nomination ? He knows Leicestershire, and he knows lawyers ; and he is a man of the loftiest talents and integrity, with whom I have lived a little, and for whom I have the highest esteem.

Will not my address through you suffice, without my writing to him in person ?

Believe me ever and very truly,

Yours most affectionately, and (since it must be so),

NOEL BYRON.

PISA, February 19th, 1822.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—By last post your letter was answered at some length. I also wrote to Mr. Hanson, and to Sir Francis Burdett, requesting the latter to accept my nomination of referee in the case of Wife versus Husband, on the score of monies to be divided. I also pressed and press upon *you* (my Attorney of power), that L[ady] B.'s life must be forthwith insured for ten thousand pounds, by which I can (in case of accidents) pay my creditors, while, if she lives and I live, I will set aside a sum in proportion to my share of the carrión, to pay the crows who hover about it in two, three, or more years. I will either reimburse to you the expense of insurance in your own circulars, or by such deduction from our next accompt as may

liquidate the same, whichever you please, but pray insure her life. I have so little confidence of any good coming from such a quarter, that I have been rather deprest in spirit than otherwise, since the intelligence that I had one enemy the less in this world.

They say “Knowledge is power.” I used to think so; but they meant “*money*” who said so, and when Socrates declared “that all he knew was that he knew nothing,” he merely intended to declare that he had not a drachma in the Athenian world.

The principal points for the consideration of my referee, besides those more technical ones (wherewithal Mr. Hanson should possess him) are *firstly*, the large settlement (sixty thousand pounds, i.e. ten thousand pounds more than I was advised to make upon the Miss Milbanke) made by me upon this female; *secondly*, the comparative smallness of her then fortune (twenty thousand pounds, and *that* never paid), when surely as a young man with an old title, of a fortune independent enough at that time (as Newstead would have made me, had the then purchaser kept to his bargain), with some name and fame in the world, I might have pretended to no worse a match than Miss Milbanke anywhere, and in England to a much better, whether you take into the balance, fortune, person, or connection. *Thirdly*, my leaving both her father Sir Ralph, and her uncle Lord Wentworth (notwithstanding that I was again strongly advised to the contrary) perfectly free to leave their property as they liked; instead of requiring a previous settlement upon her; thereby showing (what was true) that I did not wed her for her expectations, and (for anything I know) I may be as much disappointed in them, as in any comfort which came with her. But all this at that time is surely not to operate *now* against me in the mind of my referee; after I have been made the victim of this woman’s family, and have been absolutely ruined in reputation, and anything but a gainer in fortune by the match hitherto.

I certainly did by no means marry her for her fortune, but if, after having undergone what I have, “Fortune”

(like honour) "comes unlooked for," I feel by no means disposed to abandon my just *claim* to my just share, at the same time neither desiring, nor requiring more than is fair and honourable. And so there is a short end to a long chapter. Let me be answered by you in course of post.

Yours ever and truly, NOEL BYRON.

P.S. I wrote to you some time before this date on Southey's business (to call him out), which is not to be superseded by *this*, recollect. I shall be very willing to come to England to meet him, but I do not see any reason why I should go to be bored about the law business, of the new dispute between my wife and her husband. Recollect that she has her father's fortune in complete reversion to herself, and that I have merely *her life* interest in her uncle's.

. With regard to the mansion house, I have as little wish to inhabit as to dispute about it. That may be either waived, or given up for a moderate equivalent, whichever my referee pleases to think properst.

If there be any *Church* patronage, stickle for it *obstinately*; I should like to prefer a clergyman; also I should like to know the appropriation of any timbers which are to be felled, and how vested, and whether I have any interest in the *interest* of the same. I think the will directed such produce to be vested somewhere, for some purpose or other, but what I forget.

PISA, February 20th, 1822.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—My instructions are already touched upon in my two letters to you. They may be simplified as follows:—

The possession of the estates to be claimed for me, paying Lady Byron a proper annuity from the same. Mr. Hanson has instructions to acquaint the arbitrator with all points of information, and interest on my behalf.

I have no objection to Sir Ralph occupying the mansion house during his lifetime, but the *option* of occupying it after his demise to *revert to*, or remain with *me*,

though it is not probable that I should disturb Lady B.'s residence there at any period.

In the event of the estates rising in value, I should have no objection to increasing Lady B.'s allowance in proportion.

The church preferment, and manor to remain with me; or at least, an equal right thereon.

I wish to know, too, about the felling of timber, and vesting the monies arising from such, what is the proper course? or is there any such? I recollect hearing of something of the kind some years ago.

I wish my arbitrator to see Mr. Hanson, and to give him a fair *hearing* upon all points which he thinks proper to be stated, leaving, of course, to Sir Francis to give them what weight he thinks proper.

I am not aware of more to be added at present. I wrote to you about the Rochdale *toll* business a few days ago, and I now enclose two other letters of Mr. Hanson, as a sort of memorandum on the Noel estate business, which I particularly recommend to your attention, because his opinions upon it coincide with mine. If I see that what I consider my *rights* are properly adjusted, of course I may not think it unfair to increase Lady N.'s allowance, or to do what is handsome in all respects on that and other matters. Tell Burdett that if he makes me an adequate landholder, I will come and have a touch for reform in the House with him, that is to say in the House of Peers.

Ever and truly yours, NOEL BYRON.

Pisa, February 23rd, 1822.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I have already answered your letters. The circulars are arrived, and circulating like the Vortices (or Vortex's) of Des-Cartes. Still I have a due care of the needful, and *keeps* a look out ahead. I have written to you three times since the announcement of the change.

My only extra expense (and it is more than I have spent upon myself) is a loan to Leigh Hunt of two hundred and fifty pounds' worth of furniture I have

bought for him ; and a boat which I am building for myself at Genoa, which will cost a hundred or more.¹

With regard to L. Hunt, he stuck by me through thick and thin when all shook and some shuffled in 1816. He never asked me for a loan till now. I was very willing to accommodate a man to whom I have obligations. He is now at Plymouth, waiting for a ship to sail for Italy.

But to return, I am determined to have all the monies I can, whether by my own funds, or succession, or law-suit, or wife, or MSS. or any lawful means whatsoever.

I will pay (though with the sincerest reluctance), my remaining creditors, and my man of law, by instalments, from the award of the arbitrators, or from the £10,000 to be ensured on her Ladyship's vitality, in case that I should survive her.

I recommend to you the notice in one of Mr. Hanson's letters on the demand of monies for the Rochdale tolls of market.

And above all I recommend my interests to Sir Francis B[urde]tt, and to your honourable worship.

Recollect too that I expect some monies for the various MSS. (no matter what), and in short " *Rem-quocunque modo Rem* " ; the noble feeling of cupidity grows upon us with our years.

Believe me yours ever and truly, NOEL BYRON.

Byron to Hobhouse

PISA, March 9th, 1822.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—“ If I am of age let me have my fortin.” Why did you not write to me before ? Now that the old lady is gone, I forgive her memory, which is perhaps more than she would have done by mine.²

¹ The “ Bolivar ” actually cost £1,000, or more. See letter dated 12 Sept. 1822.

² Lady Noel, who died 22 Jan. 1822, left to the trustees a portrait of Byron, with directions that it was not to be shown to his daughter Ada till she attained the age of twenty-one. Byron appears to have written a very kind letter to his wife on this occasion. See *Letters and Journals*, vi. 20-1.

I had already forgiven Murray before I received your epistle, so that I cannot assume the merit of complying with your request. I dare say you are quite right; and it seems that you were not far wrong about that 'ere "Cain," which must be a *Rochefoucault* consolation for you. I will, however, make one remark, which is, that your letter gave me far more pain than all this outcry, which has had no great effect, at least, upon myself.

My wrath with Murray arose from previous considerations, long before the publication of the plays, but as I have graciously accorded a pardon to my own interest, you may be spared the recapitulation of an author's irritabilities.

The papers tell me your "whereabouts" in politics, and also give a "sheet of speech" occasionally, of you and your yoke-fellow. I am all for the agricultural interest, now that I am likely to have the land of other people—at least, during their lifetime. I highly approve of the ministerial measures, however, though I don't understand them. Still, like the bailiff in "*Amelia*," I love liberty, though I must say, with the butler in the "*Vicar of Wakefield*," that you seem to be taking kindly to the "saddles of wooden shoes," of which Lord Londonderry appears to be the national Hoby.¹ How very odd, that you should all be governed by a man who can neither think nor speak English.

"Did I ever? no, I never," &c., &c. My head aches, considerably, from a symposium of yesterday, which closed with a midnight of rather more Brantwein and water than agrees with me this morning. But in general, I am temperate, taking only a pint of light clary wines at my *one* meal. Go on, and prosper.

Yours ever, and truly affectionate, NOEL BYRON.

Byron to Kinnaird

PISA, March 22nd, 1822.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I regret this portrait whim of

¹ Hoby was a fashionable London bootmaker.

Lady Noel's,¹ because it shows a posthumous protraction of no very good feelings on her part. You must advise Dr. Lushington and Lady B., from me, that I came to this discussion of interests, with every conciliatory disposition to settle things amicably; as far as the *separation* would allow, but that I will *not* wittingly have my daughter prejudiced against her father.² We must have something about her settled in Chancery, or I must have an assurance from their part, that her mind is not to be biassed against me. I must also stipulate that Mrs. Clermont is *not* to be about her person. If these points are not accorded, I must come to England, and bring the matter before a court of law, as far as regards her education, and my paternal right to direct it. I have, *otherwise*, no wish to remove her from the mother.

Yours and very truly, NOEL BYRON.

P.S. I hear of some erroneous paragraphs in the foreign papers (taken from the English) on the Noel business—I trust that you will see all such corrected.

It is more honourable for all parties, that the real [terms] of the settlement should be fully comprehended.

Byron to Hobhouse

PISA, April 11th, 1822.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I did not disapprove of your Philippic on Canning,³ but thought it equally just, and able, quite a piece of *permanent* oratory, which will last longer than either of you. But I heard (and did not allude to it, as you never did yourself) that you had written a pamphlet about him, which you refused to avow, when he charged you therewith. Now I daresay I was wrong, but not knowing the circumstances I perhaps might be of opinion that you should have

¹ Covering up Byron's portrait until Ada comes of age. *Letters and Journals*, vi. 42.

² My father told me that Lady Lovelace had not seen her father's handwriting till she called in Albemarle Street and he gave her the MS. of (I think) *Beppo*. J. M.

³ P. 173, note.

owned it, as it was personal. Still, however, as I do not know the circumstances and was not consulted, I repeat that I can form no positive opinion nor does it matter if I did, as you should be the best judge of your own decorum, and will have had better advice than mine upon all such subjects.

“ Precarious ! ” my Lady’s “ health precarious ! ” Oons ! what do you mean ? Must I be reduced to marry Mrs. Coutts then in case of widowerhood ? You would see that my second match would be an excellent one, as somebody would be sure to take me because all the world would say that she ought not. Indeed my greatest obligation to Lady Noel Byron, or whatever her name is, is, that she has prevented me from marrying. But—

How goes the arbitration
Upon this separation ?
I trust my friend Burdett
Will know how to word it,
In dividing the acres
With the Baron of Dacres.

Enclosed I send you (they are already sent to Douglas K[innaid], the depositions on a squabble between some English, and soldiers (horse and foot), in which there was some cutting and slashing about a fortnight ago. I wish to know what you think of it.¹

Yours ever and truly N. B.

P.S. Observe that I mistook the fellow for an *Ossifer* as he was well dressed and mounted &c. Copies of these depositions &c. were forwarded to Douglas Kd. a week ago. They have still detained a servant of mine, and a servant of Count Gamba’s on suspicion, but they cannot even make out with what weapon the Dragoon was perforated. Some said a pistol, an air-gun, or sabre, or stiletto, a pitchfork, a lance, and all this in presence of thousands of people ! Pretty evidence of crowds. The ragamuffin is at last out of danger, but

¹ The affray with the dragoon Stefano Masi at the Porta alle Piagge at Pisa. See *Letters*, vi. 43–6, and Appendix II.

he was smartly touched up at the outset. Though he richly deserved it, I am glad that he did not go off, but recovered, though after several changes. There is now an opportunity of studying jurisprudence, which, however, *you* know already.

Byron to Kinnaird

PISA, April 18th, 1822.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—The decision¹ is quite satisfactory to me. It would have been no less so had Sir Francis decided that she was to have all; or nothing at all. I chose him as arbitrator and not as an advocate, in the fullest confidence of his ability and integrity, and no result would have altered my opinion of his having decided in the best manner under the circumstances. I believe I need add nothing except my acknowledgments for his trouble; also the same to Lord Dacre, whose conduct has my full approbation. You do not mention whether Kirkby Mallory is to be tenanted by Lady B. with, or without my option. If the former, it is probably at her service during Sir R.'s life, and perhaps afterwards. However I will take your opinion upon this point.

About the child, I merely require that she is *not* to be approached by Mrs. Clermont. Upon that point my opinion is not to be altered.

I could wish to suggest that the famous picture will be spoilt if it is not occasionally taken out of its case and exposed to the air. Tell Dr. Lushington so.

About "managing the estates," I should like to know how I am to manage what I know nothing about, and how the net produce is to be ascertained and received?

The fairest way would be for Lady B. and me to appoint a joint receiver. I will do anything they like, in reason, for the advantage of the property. I am sorry that her health is so precarious, *not* on account of the estate only but for the child's sake, and her own.

¹ The settlement of the division of the Wentworth property.
Letters and Journals, vi. 18, 19.

I wish you would tell Lushington, that now the thing is settled I hope some more amicable mode of adjusting the *details* of business may be adopted ; it would save bickerings and bitterness among rival agents &c. &c. Lady B.'s mind, her cold concentration has worked upon her health, while I, by saying what comes uppermost, am less preyed upon by such considerations.

You will, or ought to have received the documents relative to a row here. Please to acknowledge them.

I have received and read the defence of "Cain." Who is my Warburton ? he is a clever and a kind man, whoever be he.¹

Yours ever and truly, N. BN.

PISA, May 2nd, 1822.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—You will regret to hear the death of my natural daughter Allegra a short time ago, of a fever.

You will have received some documents which I sent on the 4th A[pril] relative to a quarrel here with a dragoon, in the course of which Mr. Hay was wounded, and dragoon stabbed, both recovered—dragoon some days in danger of life—but now well again.

Mr. Murray does not say whether he has received the "Mystery," and "Vision" from you ; I must require an explicit answer from him on the subject. As I have not limited him to any terms, but leave that discussion till we can ascertain how far the things succeed, I can neither permit nor excuse any evasions on his part.

I have read the defence of "Cain," which is very good. Who can be the author ?

As to the "Vision," Murray has been directed to print it so cheaply as to evade the pirates by the lowness of his price ; and (if the row about "Cain" has disturbed him) to put either another name, or no name, as publisher, or to publish it as a foreign edition.

¹ "Harroviensis" in an open letter to Sir Walter Scott. See note, *Letters*, vi. 49. Murray described the defender as "a tyro in literature," but gave no name. *Letters*, vi. 76

As to myself, I shall not be deterred by an outcry. They hate me, and I detest them, I mean your present public, but they shall not interrupt the march of my mind, nor prevent me from telling the tyrants who are attempting to trample upon all thought, that their thrones will yet be rocked to their foundation. It is Madame de Staël who says that “all talent has a propensity to attack the strong.” *I* have never flattered them I am sure, whether it [words torn off] or no. But these [words torn off] only strong for the moment, I think that they will soon be overthrown.

Believe me, ever and truly yrs. N. B.

P.S. Mr. Rogers passed the other day. I received and treated him with all attention in my power, in return for which he will probably abuse me, as he does everybody. He does not look younger, nor better humoured for his journey.

P. B. Shelley to Byron

VILLA MAGNI, LERICI, May 3rd, 1822.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—I have been compelled by circumstances to tell Clare the real state of the case.¹ I will not describe her grief to you; you have already suffered too much; and, indeed, the only object of this letter is to convey her last requests to you, which, melancholy as one of them is, I could not refuse to ask, and I am sure you will readily grant. She wishes to see the coffin before it is sent to England, and I have ventured to assure her that this consolation, since she thinks it such, will not be denied her. It had better be at Leghorn than at Pisa, on many accounts; you can tell me exactly on what day the funeral will be there, and thus save an hour of unnecessary delay in our journey, during which I shall suffer scarcely less than Clare. She also wishes you would give her a portrait of Allegra, and if you have it, a lock of her hair, however small.

¹ Allegra had died of fever at the convent at Bagna Cavallo on 19 April 1822.

May I ask you, if you think fit to do this, to send the portrait and the hair by the bearer of this letter ; anything, however slight, might be at once the food and the diversion of grief so excessive as she suffers. If you have only one portrait, and desire to retain the original, I will engage to obtain a copy of it, and to return you the former.¹

This letter will, I fear, infect you, as it has been infected, with the melancholy that reigns here. But Nature is here as vivid and joyous as we are dismal, and we have built, as Faust says, “our little world in the great world of all” as a contrast rather than a copy of that divine example. I ought to tell you Tita is arrived with Mrs. Dawkins’ passport, and has reassumed his marine life. He seems as happy as a bird just let loose from a cage. Will you have the goodness to pay Pietro ten crowns for me, which in the hurry of my departure I forgot to leave with him for Mary’s Greek master ? which we will settle when we meet. Pray give my kindest regards to Pietro,² who is a person for whom I feel no common liking, and remind him of his promise to come quickly and stay long with us here. You will be delighted with Spezia, although the accommodations are as wretched as the scenery is divine. The Williamses, with all their furniture embarked, and no place to sleep in, have taken refuge with me for the present ; and they are, in my actual situation, a great relief and consolation. Of this, indeed, I have great need. Poor Clare begins to get very ill with the excessive and unintermittent suffering she sustains ; although what I chiefly dreaded is spared, as she retains her senses. The messenger will wait for your reply. I shall probably see you soon. Tell me how you are, and what news, good or bad, you have received, and believe me,

My dear Lord B.,

Yours most faithfully, P. B. SHELLEY.

¹ Byron acceded to this request, and a miniature portrait of Allegra remained with Clare to the day of her death, on 19 March 1879.

² Count Pietro Gamba, Teresa Guiccioli’s brother, who went to Greece with Byron.

Byron to Kinnaird

VILLA DUPUY, LEGHORN, May 26th, 1822.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I was invited by the Americans on board of their squadron here, and received with the greatest kindness, and rather *too much ceremony*. They have asked me to sit for my picture to an American artist now in Florence. As I was taking leave, an American lady took a rose (which I wore) from me, as she said she wished to send something which I had about me to America.

They showed me an American edition of my poems, &c. &c., and all kinds of attention and good will.

I also hear that as an author I am in great request in Germany. All this is some compensation for the brutality of the native English.

Would you write a *German* line to Goethe for me, explaining the omission of the dedication to "Sardanapalus" by the fault of the publisher, and asking his permission to prefix it to the forthcoming volume of "Werner" and the Mystery. Murray must put on his title-page "published for the author" which will throw all upon me, of loss or otherwise.

Ever yours, N. B.

Byron to Hobhouse

PISA, July 18th, 1822.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—You are a pretty fellow to talk about "ballads" and "tu quoques." Did you not begin first? Did not you ballad me at Brighton? in Piccadilly? and at Venice? However, I am so perfectly in the right, that I forgive, and restore you to my good graces. I don't recollect anything about the "public," or a paper war; neither do I see what the "public" could have to do with the matter. My payment with interest, was merely to have talked to you of your speeches, or some new work, in the same style you bestowed upon me in your epistle, and see how you liked it.

But I can't go on with such nonsense, nor squabble about anything of the kind, that is to say, in earnest.

As for "Prison" and "Cain," there is great hope (Murray says) of seeing him, the said Murray, in durance for publishing the same; a consummation which he deserves for shuffling with me for some time past; though not about the bust, which (*he swears*) he never *meant* to appropriate, when once he knew it to be *yours*; which, to be sure, he ought to have discovered directly. So you shall see that he shan't want a ballad either, in proper place.

As for "purchasing a biographer under pretext of doing a generous action," I am willing to bear that imputation rather than have Moore, or anyone else, suppose that *he* is obliged to me. I suppose, however, that like most men who have been talked about, I might have had (if I did not outlive my reputation, which, however is not unlikely), a biographer, without purchase, since most other scribblers have two or three, gratis. Besides I thought that I had written my *own*. But, damn all this nonsense. What are you about? Hunting?

I have not been able to hold out till you fished up the first act of "Werner," but have written *four new acts* (and am in labour with the fifth) of the same drama.¹ But I should like to see the old first, nevertheless, to compare it with the subsequent sketch.

I do not know anything here that would interest you at all, nothing but the Russian war, or *not* war, is talked about.

Douglas has not got the "Vision" publicated, will you axe him *why?* as he seemed to like it, and to wish it "stampata."

What is to be done in politics this year? I think the struggle seems approaching; let me know.

Yours ever and truly, B.

¹ This is a complete refutation of the story published by the late Hon. Frederick Leveson-Gower that *Werner* was the work of the Duchess of Devonshire which had been adopted or adapted by Byron.

P.S. Our late correspondence reminds me of one of yours at College with poor Matthews, in which one of his letters commences :—

“ Your *atrabilarious disposition*, Hobhouse ! ” &c., and yours ended with reproaching him with :—“ picking out petty peculiarities, and treasuring up trifling defects.” A pretty instance of alliteration.

But “ I’ll have a brisk with you, you dog,”¹ notwithstanding.

I have got some good claret from Leghorn, which I wish you were here to ingurgitate.

Pisa, September 2nd, 1822.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I wrote to you as you requested to Geneva, but you have not apparently received the letter.

I am in all the agonies of hiring feluccas, and packing furniture, &c. &c., for *Genoa*, where I have taken a house for a year and mean to remove shortly, as I told you in my Swiss epistle, and I have not a chair or table, and hardly a stool to sit on, besides the usual confusion attending such operations. If you come on to Florence, we must contrive a meeting (should I be still here on your arrival), or perhaps you will take Genoa in your way back. These transient glimpses of old friends are very painful, as I found the other day after Lord Clare was gone again, however agreeable they make the moment. They are like a dose of laudanum, and its subsequent languor.

It is a *lustre* since [we] met, and I am afraid it is the only *lustre* added to one of us, but you, I trust, are more resplendent in health and heart.

I have been lately ill (*all* my skin peeled off) from swimming three hours in a hot sun at Via Reggio, but my new skin is come again, though it is plaguy tender still.

Could you not contrive to voyage to Genoa with me ? Madame Guiccioli is with me, but she will travel with her father ; and we could confabulate in the old

¹ Johnson in his night-cap, loquitur. Boswell’s *Johnson*.

imperial carriage as heretofore, and squabble away as usual.

I don't know whether your temper is improved. I hear that the hustings have made you somewhat haughty, but that is natural. A man who addresses Senates and Constituents has some right to be so. My own temper is about the same, which is not saying much for it. However, I am always,

Yours truly, N. B.

The following letter, addressed to Mr. W. Webb, a banker at Leghorn, was found in April 1914, in the *Biblioteca Labronica* at that port. Its peculiar interest lies in the discovery, contrary to assertions so frequently made by Shelley's biographers—that under no circumstances would Shelley have been beholden to Byron for pecuniary assistance—the former did actually on the last day of his life accept a loan from Byron. The light thrown by this letter upon the friendly intercourse of the two poets—even after the squabbles about Leigh Hunt—not only reflects credit on both, but will necessitate a revision of the harsh judgment which Shelleyan apologists so unjustly passed on Byron's conduct at that time. It will be remembered that Shelley appointed Lord Byron as one of his executors, and left him a legacy of £2,000—a bequest which Byron, who has so often been accused of parsimony, generously declined in view of Mrs. Shelley's straitened circumstances. On 8 July Shelley was drowned in his yacht the *Ariel* off Lerici. [R. E.] See *Letters and Journals*, vi. 99.

Byron to W. Webb, Esq^r.¹

PISA, September 2nd, 1822.

DEAR SIR,—Your present of the raspberries was very

¹ A partner in the banking firm of Webb & Barry, of Genoa and Leghorn—Byron's bankers.

agreeable—they are the first of the kind I have seen in Tuscany—and I thank you for the regale.

I shall send over the circulars for the cash (duly received a day or two ago) in a cover which will be conveyed by Mr. Dunn¹ in a day or two, as he is coming over on some business shortly. I greatly doubt if Mr. Shelley has left any effects; or at least the debts will probably exceed the assets. The extreme liberality of his disposition generally left him in arrear, and the day before he was lost he borrowed of me fifty pounds which were on board in cash when the boat went down. He had, I believe, the right to dispose of his father's estate—after the demise of the latter—who is very old and infirm from a paralytic stroke—but of the exact tendency of his Will in 1817, I am ignorant, and even if there may not be a subsequent one with alterations. In the event of my being his Executor, you may rely on my using my best endeavours that the creditors should be duly paid; and of course that your claim should not be overlooked, or neglected. In the meantime there can be no harm in addressing Sir Timothy upon the subject; although, from what I have heard of him, it is not very likely that he will be disposed to liquidate his son's debts, as they were not upon good terms; and I have observed that even the tenderest parents are somewhat tenacious on the score of similar disbursements. The moment I know anything certain of the present and future state of his affairs, you shall be advised; and I will try (as Executor, if I am so) to put your business in a train of settlement as early as possible. Believe me to be, with compliments to Mrs. and Miss Webb,

Your obliged and very obedient servant,
NOEL BYRON.

Byron to Kinnaird

PISA, September 18th, 1822.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—My letters were, I grant you, very impatient, but I regret very much that they should

¹ Mr. Dunn kept a general store in the Via Ferdinando at Leghorn.

have “worked you.” The haste arose because I was going to Genoa, and could not account for the non-arrival of the circuitous notes, and if I had gone there without them, I might have waited so much the longer without knowing what had become of them.

I sent you on the 7th and 10th *two* packets containing four new cantos of D. J. the arrival of which please to acknowledge, addressing to *Genoa*, Villa Saluzzo.

I do not rely on Shadwell’s opinion. Consult Mr. *Bell*, I will abide by his opinion ; as to Chancery, *they* will suffer as much as I shall, and with that consideration it is not to be shrank from. But first let us have Bell’s counsel ; *he* is the first at the Chancery *Bar*, as they very properly call that barrier between people and their property. I positively object to drunken Davison. What ! to sit down and be saddled with *two* hundred a year, for an old superannuated toss-pot of Sir Ralph’s. Let him go back to Halnaby ; as he has got drunk in Sir Ralph’s service, let him provide for his liquid necessities.

Why the deuce did you lodge the 4000 in the *funds now*, when they are at 80 ? Could not we have got Exchequer bills or some other security *pro tempore*, as it will not only be like the loss of Trinculo’s bottle¹ “disgrace and dishonour, but an infinite loss,” having to sell out when they are low again. I wish this eternal mortgage could be settled once for all, it is now eight months we have had of shilly shally.

It would be difficult for me to judge whether anything can be extracted from Albemarle St. for the new cantos &c. ; you will be the best judge of that. Take an edition of *Humphrey Clinker*, and read to John Murray the *bookseller’s* letter, it will be a good lesson to him.

¹ “A miscarriage . . . would (like the loss of Trinculo’s bottle in the horse-pond) be attended not only with dishonour but with infinite loss.”—Sir Walter Scott.

“Trinculo : Ay, but to loose our bottles in the pool.

Stephano : There is not only disgrace and dishonour in that, monster, but an infinite loss.”

The Tempest, Act IV, Scene I.

As to piracies, he ought to print very cheap editions and *undersell* them, and reserve his *octavos* for former purchasers. You will perpend and pronounce.

The present cantos will perhaps sell, as they are full of politics, and some poesy. Hobhouse has been here this week, and I will leave a place for him to add a line to you. Yours ever, N. B.

P.S. I sent you, a week or two ago, a sort of *budget* for the ensuing year, which I daresay you will laugh [at] as part of it may be as visionary as a Minister of State's. Here is an epitaph for the Examiner.

Oh Castlereagh ! thou art a patriot now !
Cato died for his country—so do'st thou.
He perished rather than see Rome enslaved ;
Thou cut'st thy throat, *that* Britain may be saved.

Hobhouse to Kinnaird

MY DEAR KINNAIRD,—Byron calls this leaving a place for me. This small space would have been better filled by Lord B.'s prose, or verse ; but I must occupy it by just asking you to write to me, and let me hear how you are, and how going on, and what doing or going to do. Direct to Rome ; no more room but to tell you how truly I am yours,

J. C. HOBHOUSE.

Byron to Kinnaird

September 24th, 1822.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—Enclosed is another epistle of mine full of questions and calculations, which I imagine will raise the smiles of such an expert financier as your worship, who bank for “late Queens” and ladies with separate establishments.

The reason why I am so anxious to settle my affairs, and learn what I may have to trust to, is that I have long had a notion of emigration from your worn-out Europe ; but am undecided as to *where*, South America, the United States, or even Van Diemen's Land, of which I hear much, as a good place to settle in. You

will perhaps let me know what you think I may realize (the Gods willing) in 1823, by the probabilities or possibilities within stated. Do what you can for me, and let me hear.

Yours ever, N. B.

Byron to Hobhouse

PISA, September 26th, 1822.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I am glad that the letters have been of any use, but such as they are, they are owing to the Guiccioli, and her family, and not to me.

I have had a little conflict with the rheumatics, but by dint of opodeldoc and a warm bath, have fought off the flannels for this time. You may do as you like about Bartolini, it don't much matter how a man is scalped after 30 years of age. My best respects to the Miss H.'s¹ to whom I desiderate all the amusements possible at Florence.

Do you go on to Rome? We sent you a letter for the Ms. Sagrati, through Giuliani the other day. Salute Collini and Giuliani for me. The Guiccioli is pleased that you like her letter, and her bust. I hope Bartolini, as he has a better subject in her, will have more luck in the effect.

We are all packaging, to set off at *daybreak* to-morrow morning, a preliminary which by no means agrees with my dormitory habitudes. The very idea makes me yawn to that degree that my pen—

[Here a few paragraphs are added and signed by Countess Guiccioli.]

I need only add my signature to this epistle.

Believe me ever and truly yours, N.B.

Byron to Kinnaird

GENOA, 9bre 13th, 1822.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—The papers say that you have met with a serious accident. I hope that they lie, or at least exaggerate as usual. But pray let me know. I shall not be easy till I hear that you are well.

¹ Hobhouse's sisters.

I had written to you lately on business two or three letters, and sent a packet ; but it is no time to be bothering you now with such matters. Only let me know how you are, or tell some one else to write to say how you are going on.

Yrs. ever very affly. N. B.

GENOA, 9^{bre} 28th, 1822.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—Yrs. of y^e 15th arrived yesterday. It is the *first* I have heard of yr. accident from *yourself*, though you seem to refer to a prior letter. Will you please to recollect that I have few friends, and only one potestas of attorneo, and that I cannot afford to lose you in either capacity. Why will you ride impracticable cattle ? You are, or used to be, an excellent horseman, and therefore must have sought out the brute for his bad qualities, unless, indeed, he *fell* with you, which may happen to any horse, or man.

Now to your Yepistle. Of Mr. Maddison I know nothing ; my subscriptions at Watier's were paid up to my departure from England, and I thought that being abroad neutralized further disbursements during absence. What is the amount, or what is the excuse for it ? A large demand is impossible. I never dined at the club but once with Hobhouse to meet G[eneral] Sebastiani, and Flahaut ; and I paid my conscription regularly. It is a mystery to me, except that nothing in the impudence of mankind ought to surprise a philosopher.

With regard to any literary products, they are so fluctuating and uncertain, that I can make no near calculation. I shall trust the management of those, as of other affairs of more importance, to your discretion, only requesting that you won't settle them on horseback.

Does R[idgeway] publish the four or six¹ ; if the four only I can add a (12th) new canto to the remaining two,

¹ *Don Juan.*

which would form another volume, i.e., two in the whole of the new publication, of about the same size as the two former.

I have no objection to reconsider any passages, and to alter several, but I cannot promise very largely, being obstinate on such points. About Werner, you are to decide also ; I mean as to letting Murray publish.

The copy of the thing which is to go into Hunt's new journal,¹ ought to be the corrected *proof*, with Murray's or Gifford's *pencil marks* around one passage near the close, which G. thought had better be omitted ; and I am of his opinion as a point of expediency, for the publisher to avoid piracy ; I am not aware of anything unorthodox in the rest. I have carried my own economy into effect hitherto even better than I expected. I have laid up my schooner in the Arsenal (which stops that expense of wages, &c.), reduced my establishment ; sold some horses ; and mean to sell another ; thereby keeping five instead of ten ; and I wish, if possible, to live as simply as need be, for some years, though not sordidly. Now I wish to know, when I have got a few thousands together, say two or three even, how I could invest it in exchequer bills or otherwise at a low, but secure interest, so as to be convertible to immediate use if wanted, and so on with any further monies that might accrue. You see that the whole of the year 1823 incomings ought to be disposable product, since I have recovered the three thousand and odd hundred surplus of 1822 for my maintenance, &c.

You will smile at all this tirade upon business, but it is time to mind it, at least for me to mind it, for without some method in it, where or what is independence, the power of doing good to others or yourself ?

Yrs., ever and truly, N. B.

GENOA, December 1st, 1822.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I have just seen the illustrious James Wedderburn Webster, who came to visitate me

¹ *Vision of Judgment.*

here. I had not seen him these ten years. He had a black wig on, and has been made a knight for writing against the Queen. He wants a diplomatic situation, and seems likely to want it.

He found me thinner even than in 1813, for since my late illness (at Lerici on my way here), I have subsided into my former more meagre outline, and am obliged to be very abstinent by medical advice, on account of liver, and what not. I found him increased rather, but, not much ; looking redder, but tolerably fresh ; and no wiser than heretofore. He talked a deal of skimble skamble stuff, and is gone to Florence. But to the point, or, at least, my point in mentioning this new chevalier our old acquaintance. Ten years ago I lent him a thousand pounds on bond, on condition that he would not go to the *Jews*. He took the monies, and went to the *Jews*. Hanson has this bond, and there is ten years' interest due upon it. I have never dunned him, but I think that he might at least have paid some of the interest.

The bond (though a good bond) is, I presume, valuable only according to the possibility or probability of recovering said monies. Now, as Mr. Hanson is a purchaser of bonds (it hath a judgment probably to it), will he purchase this of me ? or will anybody else at a discount—somewhat considerable ?

What effects the grantor of said bond may now have, I know not, but I presume *some* still, though he has parted with his wife, who was the best of them. He had (besides her) a considerable property at one time. He might have repaid me out of Wellington's money, or Petersham's. Now what shall I take for said bond ? or rather, what is to be got ? Perpend, pronounce. Hanson will perhaps want it as “*part of his account*,” but he shan't have it, nor shall he have any more “*parts*” till we know the whole.

I have never pressed Webster, but to say truth, he has behaved shabbily about it, and had the impudence to ask me the other day, “whether my *heirs* could not act upon it.” I feel disposed to save them the

trouble ; but should I not, I trust they will require their due. I am sure that all my creditors have been a good deal less patient.

Byron to Hobhouse

GENOA, 10^{bis} 14th, 1822.

MY DEAR H[OBHOUSE],—Y[ou]rs of Turin arrived yesterday. If Lady M[organ] arrives safely, she will be received ; but I suspect the Dogana will detain her.¹ We are all in great surprise and displeasure at the Marchesa's mancanza, which is the more extraordinary as she is a particular friend of the Count G[amba] (the father who gave the letter), who, it is supposed, went still further than Pius 6th with her in their Gioventa, and at this very time, as all along, she has been a staunch supporter of Me. Guiccioli's suit against her sposo, still pending in appeal before his Papal Majesty. Be this as it may, Count G[amba] writes to enquire and remonstrate. She must have known you, as being herself a friend, and what's more, a witness of the late Queen's ; and must have heard your name, in the course of that conflict of testimonies. But we have had a complaint from Florence from Madame Regnier, that you either did not or would not avail yourself of your letter to Madame Regnier, who says she would have been glad to see you. By my own experience, and that of all I ever heard of, I know what Italian introductions [are] ; the stranger pays the visit, and invites to dinner ; and perhaps the *visit* is repaid. This is generally the case, unless you settle in a place, and then you may have enough of mummery and maccaroni, opera boxes, and conversazioni (criminal ditto included) ; but a flying stranger must take “ Folly as it flies.”

You ask after my health ; it has been worse since I saw you, is better now, and may be better still, without being what Scrope used to call “ rude health.”

¹ This refers to Lady Morgan's book on Italy, published 1821. Hobhouse sent the book, which was seized by the Dogana at Genoa, and nearly got Byron into a scrape. Byron refers to this in an unpublished letter to Douglas Kinnaird dated 16 Dec. 1822.

I never quite recovered that stupid long swim in the broiling sun and saline sea of August. At Lerici I was in my bed for four days ; and it is not the best place for beds, and physicians. The doctor made his debut by talking of *Hippocrate* ; in consequence of which, I sent him away ; but the women being clamorous as usual, and myself, as Fribble says, in “ exquisite torter,” he was recalled ; and after several formidable administrations of medicines which would not remain in the stomach ; and of glysters which could not be persuaded to quit it again, Nature, I presume, did the business, and saved me from a threatened inflammation of the bowels ; during which (by way of rocking my cradle) we had a slight shock of an earthquake, such as we felt at Athens, probably an echo of that of Aleppo. Well, I scuttled out of bed the moment I was convalescent, got to Sestri by dint of rowing, in twelve hours ; and came on per terra, to Genoa the same night ; verily believing that the journey did me more good than the physic, or the physicianer. All went on very well till about a month ago, when I had, and have a *cutaneous* and very uncomfortable eruption, for which, by the advice of an English physician, I am taking what he calls a “ *decoction of Woods* ” (and of *Forests* too, I should think by its variety of tastes), and I am so pleased with the name that I swallow a pint daily with more faith than effect hitherto.

Since I have been here I have seen Dick Fitzgibbon (Lord Clare’s brother, and your brother M.P.), Lady Hardy, and various of your country-people, and lastly, that little and insane James Wedderburn Webster, now converted into a Knight (but of no order—a regular Address and City Knight), yclept Sir James Wedderburn. I saw little change in him, except that his countenance rather more resembled his *backside* (do you remember Mr. Frank, of the coffee house’s, accentuation of that injured word ?) than heretofore ; and that he had gotten a new wig, and says he means to marry, having a wife living, from whom he cannot get divorced.

You will have heard before this reaches you that our friend D[ouglas] K[innaird] has had *another* fall, from *another* horse, and thereby brake his collar-bone, besides being grievously contused ; but he is getting well, and I wish that he would choose his stud better. I should look in vain for such another Potestas of Attorneo, and still more vainly for a similar friend ; that is to say, who could unite the power and the will to undergo the drudgery he has done for “ P.P., Clerk of this Parish.”¹

I trust that this will find you flourishing, in speech as in health. I doubt if the Congressors will be so pacific as you anticipate.

Henry Hunt is out of prison, and John Hunt is in a fair way of going into it, by what I hear ; all you predicted has come to pass. I have gotten myself into a scrape with the very best intentions (i.e., to do good to these Sunday paper patriots). Doug. will narrate as much as you care to listen to. Leigh Hunt is discomposed because said Murray showed (and be d—d to him) a letter in which I qualified that illustrious editor as “ a bore,” and I have offended everybody, like the old man and his ass. What is to be done with mine ?

Pray excuse this long epistle. All here salute you with meridian cordiality ; remember me to Burdett, and the Dougall, and &c., &c., believing me

Ever yours and faithfully, N. B.

Byron to Kinnaird

10^{bre} 19th, 1822.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I am not very well, I suspect worse than you are, at least I hope so. I am as temperate as an Anchorite but I suspect that temper-

¹ The feigned signature of Dr. Arbuthnot, appended to a volume of Memoirs in ridicule of Burnet’s *History of my own Times*.

Sir Walter Scott alludes to him. Byron often alludes to “ P. P. Clerk of the Parish ” in reference to himself. See *Letters*, v. 365.

See also Pope’s *Memoirs of P.P. Clerk of this Parish*.

ance is a more effective medicine at twenty, than at almost thirty-five.

Oh, Parish Register ! oh, Peage, why ?
Record those years that I would feign deny.

I shall not trouble you further, and I merely do it now as a sleeping-draught for your collar-bone.

You will have seen Hobhouse by this time, who I hope returned safely. I had a letter from his brother, dated 1821, introducing an Overland gentleman from India, whom I wished back again. However, I mounted on "tit-back for to ride," paid him a visit up four hundred pair of stairs at a Genoese Inn ; and came back half frozen from politeness to an equinoctial new acquaintance. Pray make this a merit to the Demagogue. It was all out of deference to the M.P. who, I hope, gets on ; and neither suffers from oligarchy, nor that most severe aristocracy *Polly-garchy*.

Yours ever and truly, N. B.

P.S. Send me a *good Cocker*, or the best simplifier of arithmetic. I cast up my household accounts, and settle them daily myself, and you cannot imagine the difference.

GENOA, 10^{brs} 23rd, 1822.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—With regard to Mr. J[ohn] H[unt] you may by all means retain Scarlett, or other able counsel. With regard to how far I am called upon for the expenses, I propose to you the following considerations. I advanced to Mr. L[eigh] H[unt] two hundred and fifty pounds in January, or February, 1822 ; and since about one hundred and fifty, nay, nearly three hundred more, if I include furniture, which I bought for him ; the expense of his journey (which *he would* take against my wish) to Genoa ; and a bill I paid for him at Leghorn. The day after his landing, he came to me and Shelley, on his brother's account ; I could not furnish further cash at the moment. He

then asked for an MS.,¹ and I reluctantly acceded, particularly cautioning them to omit any actionable passages from "the Vision," &c. I even proposed to them to give up the notion of the journal. L[eigh] H[unt] agreed, but J[ohn] H[unt] would publish it. For my own share of "the Liberal," I have declined taking anything whatever for the present; and I have furnished them with "the Pulci" and "the New Mystery." However I will be guided by what you please; and will even come to England, if that will remove the prosecution from his shoulders; and have desired his brother to say so. The prosecution will at least help his sale. As to the D[on] J[uan]'s, he seems to hint that you do not like them. You said to me that you did; and I remember you did not like the three, 3, 4, 5, but you see that they succeeded as well as the first and second. I sent you the 12th canto on the 14th inst. You have now seven cantos, which will make two volumes. If you think it can be done with Mr. J[ohn] H[unt] (the publication I mean), you can come to an agreement with him; he giving securities that he, and his son Henry (if of age) will submit their accounts of the profits to proper referees of our choosing.

As to my writing a defence, that is lawyer's work; and I desired him to consult one before he published the Vision, &c. As to the D[on] J[uan]'s, they ought to be published immediately, that is (after I have revised the proofs which should be sent accordingly). We must not allow ourselves to be bullied by gangs—whether of Admiralty, or Bridge-St.—"Arcades ambo" "Murrays both."

With regard to me, I am reducing my establishment, have sent away for sale two more horses, and am about to dispose of a superfluous carriage or two, and various other useless books, and furniture; such as snuff-boxes, trinkets, &c. &c.

I repeated to you that no proposition on the Jew annuities can be listened to, till all others are discussed.

Yrs. ever and affectly, N. B.

¹ For *The Liberal*. See *Letters and Journals*, vi. 122.

On 9. Oct. 1822 Byron wrote to Murray from Genoa on the subject of *The Liberal*, then on the eve of publication. "I am afraid the Journal is a bad business, and won't do; but in it I am sacrificing myself for others—I can have no advantage in it. I believe the brothers Hunt to be honest men; I am sure they are poor ones. They have not a rap: they pressed me to engage in this work, and in an evil hour I consented: still I shall not repent, if I can do them the least service. I have done all I can for Leigh Hunt since he came here; but it is almost useless. His wife is ill, his six children not very tractable, and in the affairs of this world he himself is a child. The death of Shelley left them totally aground; and I could not see them in such a state without using the common feelings of humanity, and what means were in my power, to set them afloat again."

Unfortunately the contents of this letter were made known to Leigh Hunt, probably through his brother John Hunt, who had had some misunderstanding with Murray, and gave pain to both him and his wife. Leigh Hunt remonstrated with Byron, who, on 25 December reproached Murray for having allowed his letter to be seen by others. "My original motives I already explained (in the letter which you thought proper to show): they are the *true* ones, and I abide by them, and I told Leigh Hunt so when he questioned me on the subject of that letter. He was violently hurt, and never will forgive me at bottom; but I can't help that. As to any community of feeling, thought, or opinion between Leigh Hunt and me, there is little or none."

The following letters from Mary Shelley speak for themselves.

Mrs. Shelley to Byron

ALBARO, December 1822.

DEAR LORD BYRON,—Hunt does not feel so lightly as your Lordship does as to what the *world will say*, and he has a deeper stake than you in it. I have read to him the principal part of your letter, and will write word for word his answer. I will add nothing—for really I have nothing to say—except that Murray is a troublesome fellow, and his first firebrand would have been more agreeable if, like the widow's, it had been hid under a bushel. Hunt says, “That he thinks something better might have been done, but that there are matters of taste, which it is not to be supposed that any body can alter at a moment's notice, even if they ought. And that with regard to friendship, he feels that his friendship, in the sense in which you speak of it, is in the other world.”

Certainly, if you did not feel any [friendship] for one of such transcendent merit, and whose merit you so freely acknowledged and praised, as Shelley, [Hunt] cannot complain. For your pursuits and tastes were far more congenial—and then none of that *delicacy* you mention, which is the death of all sentiment, had existence between you. I do not think that his *poverty* in any degree enters into your consideration, unless to make you hold your hand—for I believe that talents and genius would at any time in your mind outweigh the [illegible] [disadvantage of poverty]? He sees this somewhat differently, and talks about your being a *Lord*; he is quite in the wrong—it is *rimini-pimini*, and *follage*, and all that, which makes you dislike entering into the journal, although his talents of another kind have caused you to enter into it.

You cannot tell how I have been pained in entering into this subject [with] you. But I shall annoy you no more.

Ever yours obliged, MARY SHELLEY.¹

Saturday.

¹ For Byron's reply, see *Letters*, vi. 174.

DEAR LORD BYRON,—I am induced to say a few words to your Lordship on this affair of Hunt's. I wish, indeed, that I could *say* them, as these things are always better said ; but I will not venture on a second intrusion, and dare not inflict upon you the pain of paying me a visit. Hunt did not send those letters to his nephew, that he sent for you to read, and this delay has made him reflect. Indeed, my dear Lord Byron, he thinks much of this, and takes it much to heart. When he reflects that his *bread* depends upon the success of this journal, and that you deprecate it in those circles where much harm can be done to it ; that you deprecate him as a coadjutor, making it thus appear (pardon the quotation) that his poverty and not your will consents—all this dispirits him greatly. He thinks that an explanation would come ungracefully from him, but that it would come gracefully from you. He is very much vexed that his nephew noticed these reports ; but they are noticed. Murray may publish, or give free circulation to your letter, and that places him in a kind of degrading point of view. For "his sick wife and six children" are alleged—not your friendship for him. He said this evening that he thought of writing to you about this ; but I offered to write instead to spare him a painful task. He does not see my letter.

Consider that, however Moore may laugh at rimini-pimini, Hunt is a very good man. Shelley was greatly attached to him on account of his integrity, and that really your letter *does* place him in an awkward situation. The journal is now a work of charity—a kind of subscription for Hunt's family ; this must hurt the work. Do not you then think that a few words from you in explanation or excuse, such as could appear, are due to your literary companionship with him ? It would be a good-natured thing—and a prudent thing—since you would stop effectually the impertinence of Murray, by shewing him that he has no power to make you quarrel with your friend, and that you do not fear his treason.

It is a painful thing to me to put forward my own opinion. I have been so long accustomed to have another act for me; but my years of apprenticeship must begin. If I am awkward at first, forgive me. I would, like a dormouse, roll myself in cotton at the bottom of my cage, and never peep out. But I see Hunt annoyed in every way. Let us pass over his vanity. What if that has been pampered—little else about him has—and qualms have visited him even upon that tender point. But here even the independence of his character is in some measure staked—besides the success of his journal, and consequently his very existence. So I would fain do a little to make him easy again. You asked me the other evening why I had not sent you a note about it; I do so now. So do not think me impertinent; if you do not know that I am timid, yet I am so—it is a great effort to me to intrude with my writing upon you. But if I can make Hunt have less painful feelings by inducing you to soften the effect that your letter must have had in London, why for that I will even risk being impertinent.

I have copied your MS. The “Eternal Scoffer” seems a favourite of yours. The critics, as they used to make you a Childe Harold, Giaour, and Lara all in one, will now make a compound of Satan and Cæsar to form your prototype, and your 600 fire-brands in Murray’s hands will be the costume. I delight in your new style more than in your former *glorious one*, and shall be much pleased when your fertile brain gives my fingers more work.

Any news of Douglas Kinnaird? May I ask you to answer this letter soon, as Hunt’s letters for England will not be written until it arrives, and really another post ought not to be lost.

Again I beg your Lordship to excuse my annoying you.

Truly yours, MARY SHELLEY.

Saturday morning.

*Byron to Kinnaird*GENOA, 10^{bre} 30th, 1822.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I have received the enclosed letter from young Hanson, and refer him to you for an answer. If you think the proposed mortgages eligible, we can agree. I have also yours of the 17th; I am willing to retain counsel (at my expense), and the best going, for Mr. J. Hunt.

I am also willing to be *both ostensible* and *responsible* for the poem; and to come home, and face the consequences as the *author*, though I did not wish the publication of the “V[ision of Judgment],”¹ and indeed particularly warned him to pause; or erase passages likely to be obnoxious. But I never said, nor say, that he is to have the *profit* of what I have written; meaning I suppose, the unpublished D. Juans; on the contrary, I have particularly prescribed to you the *terms* on which it is to be published. All this outcry is merely *temporary*; its very violence will defeat itself, and shows the alarm, and weakness of those who use it. But be this as it may, I will not be bullied; and I would rather come home to be calumniated, and persecuted, than receive the adulations of a dastard and slavish people. Such I think you.

With regard to “the Liberal,” I merely said that I should not call on him for any accounts on my behalf, till the profits (if ever) became sufficient to make him and his brother comfortable, but that *then* I would, or might, receive a decent proportion, according to the value of the articles contributed. I also *reserve* to *myself* the copyright of my own articles, that they may afterwards form a volume (if I like) to class with those

¹ The *Vision of Judgment* was sent to Murray on 4 Oct. 1821, set in type, and the proofs were revised, but Murray not unnaturally hesitated to publish it. At the end of a year Byron made him hand over the revised proofs to Hunt, who published it in the 1st No. of *The Liberal*, but without the Preface. It raised a storm and Hunt was prosecuted, but the verdict of guilty was not issued till 19 July 1824. See *Byron's Poetry*, iv. 478–9.

published by Murray, for which Mr. H[unt] may or may not treat, as hereafter may seem good.

With regard to the D. Juans, I wish them to be published, and *soon* (now that they bully, the slaves !) but with all due precaution that the publisher accounts for the profits periodically, and fully, and fairly, including the twelfth canto sent on the 14th. They will form *two vols.*, *three* in the first, and *four* in the second.

For “the Liberal,” as I said, I have no present call on Mr. J. H., and I will fee counsel in his behalf; choose the best, and I repeat, that if he will give me up instead, I will come and face it.

I am very glad of old Goethe being pleased, having a great esteem and admiration of that illustrious patriarch of European letters.

In the meantime I am reducing expenses; selling horses, carriages, etc., etc. I have saved rather better than three thousand, three hundred pounds, to begin the year with; which is *three hundred* more than I calculated upon, and probably *three thousand* more than you did. This with the new year’s income (if realized), will be upwards of nine thousand pounds; add five hundred pounds for the Rochdale tolls, which I transmitted to you lately, and say—I know not what—but something more, for Werner, and the seven cantos of the D. J.’s, and we ought to be able to face the current expenses.

Yours ever and truly, N. B.

CHAPTER XIII

GENOA—GREECE
(1823)

BYRON's restlessness and dissatisfaction with his present life, which had been growing in 1822, assumed more definite shape this year. He contemplated various distant journeys and enterprises. "I have long had a notion of emigration from your worn-out Europe, but am undecided as to *where*—South America, the United States, or even Van Diemen's Land, of which I hear much as a place to settle in." Moreover, the fetters of servitude were galling him, and, as we have already seen, he told Hobhouse that he wanted to free himself from them.

In 1823 an opportunity of useful action presented itself. Ever since 1821 the Greeks, with the aid of Ali Pasha of Jannina, had been at war, with varying fortunes: the Turks were unable to subdue the Greeks, and the Greeks were too much at variance among themselves to achieve success. A national convention was held in 1822, and Mavrocordato was elected President, but the movement was hampered by personal quarrels and divisions. One party looked to England for help, another to Russia, but neither of those powers was in a position to intervene actively.

In 1823 an impulse was given to the Greek insurrection by the efforts of foreign enthusiasts: a committee was formed in London, and Byron, always a lover of Greece, was drawn into active service in her cause.

It was not easy for him to break his bonds. “I am doing all I can to get away, but have all kinds of obstacles thrown in my way by the ‘absurd womankind’ . . . who seems determined on preventing me from doing any good.”

There is a striking change in the tone of Byron’s letters from this time forward: there is little of the banter and recklessness which characterize his earlier letters. As soon as he is brought face to face with real work and responsibility, his sound common sense, his clearness of vision and his modesty as to his own capabilities are clearly evident. He is sadly disillusioned about the Greeks, and the old wit flashes out when he writes to Kinnaird that St. Paul was right, “There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek.”

There are several letters from Mrs. Shelley this year. Owing to her husband’s death and the obduracy of her father-in-law, Sir Timothy Shelley, she was in very straitened circumstances. Byron gave her frequent employment in copying his MSS.; but Trelawny—not the most trustworthy of witnesses—accuses him of sordidness and selfishness, of behaving shabbily to Mrs. Shelley, and of making such a grudging offer of help when she wanted money to enable her to return to England that she refused it. Yet we find her writing to Byron: “I am very grateful to you for your kind offers yesterday. In part I must avail myself of them to get to England”; “Your letter is very good, and I cannot express to you how obliged I am by your kindness.”

Lord Byron’s first meeting with Lord and Lady Blessington, who were travelling in Italy with Count D’Orsay, and whom he advised to take the villa Il Paradiso, near Genoa, is not mentioned in this correspondence, but the meeting must be recorded as one of the important events of his life. Of all the

ladies with whom Byron associated, Lady Blessington was perhaps the one best suited by her charm, her good sense, her intelligence, and her sympathy to be a companion of Byron if they had met in earlier days : had she been destined to be his wife his whole career would have been changed. Her *Conversations of Byron*, published in 1834, is one of the most interesting and illuminating accounts of him which exist.

The *Age of Bronze*, *The Island*, and some more cantos of *Don Juan* were the principal literary products of 1823.

Byron to Hobhouse

GENOA, March 19th, 1823.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Before my affairs can be extracted from the attorney, Douglas Kd. must descend to complete the negotiation with Mr. Deardon of Rochdale. On the 24th of January, I forwarded to Kd. a very amicable answer of mine to a letter of Deardon's, and also the said letter ; the former for him to forward to Mr. D., and the latter for his own inspection. I have since repeatedly pressed him at *least* to *acknowledge* the receipt of these, but not one word of reply on that point. In the meantime the suits are going on, and of course expenses and anxieties proportionate. Few of my friends can be more anxious to get rid of law and lawyers than I am. As to the Portsmouth business, all I know, or could know of it, was from Mr. H[anson]'s own statement. He told me that old Lady First Portsmouth was dead, and that Portsmouth's brother wanted him to marry *another* old woman, that he might have no more children ; but that Lord P. wished to marry a *young* woman, and seemed inclined to one of H[anson]'s daughters. I saw nothing very unnatural in this, nor lunatical.¹ Of Lord P. himself, I saw nothing till the day of his marriage.

¹ A Commission of Inquiry into the mental state of Lord Portsmouth found that he had been a lunatic since 1809. *Letters and Journals*, vi. 170.

On the evening previous to the ceremony, I received an invitation from Mr. H[anson] begging me, as a friend of many years' acquaintance with his family, to be present at the marriage, which was to take place next morning. I went. I saw no appearance of entrapment, or compulsion. The ladies, and other witnesses, went in a carriage. The carriage being full, Lord P. and myself walked to the church. On the way, he told me that he had long liked Miss Hanson, even during the life of the first Lady P., and asked me if I did not think she would make a very good wife. The ceremony passed without anything remarkable, the women cried a little as usual ; but Lord P.'s deportment was quite calm and collected. After the ceremony I went home ; and the family, I believe, went into the country. I did not see the couple again till long afterwards ; and then but rarely. I went as I would do to any other marriage. It was no affair of mine to interfere in, and I thought that if Lord P. got a good, plain, quiet, housekeeping wife,—*young* too, instead of that tough morsel prepared by his brother, it was no bad bargain for either party. I could not foresee horse-whipping and the like of that there. I could not foretell *venality*, for I was told that Lord P.'s property was in *trust*, well secured ; and that Lady P. could only have a jointure of a thousand a year. I could not foresee *lunacy* in a man who had been allowed to walk about the world five and forty years as compos of voting, franking, marrying, convicting thieves on his own evidence, and similar pastimes, which are the privileges of sanity. I could have no interest of my own. I had nothing to acquire from Mr. Hanson, as the state of his bills do show ; being about ten thousand pounds (most part paid) since that epoch. Had my evidence been called for by either party, I would have given it impartially. There is—or was—an affidavit of mine on the subject before the Chancellor in 1814. I thought, and still think, that the marriage might have been like any other marriage. Of the courtship (which, as far as I can recollect from the time Mr. H[anson] first men-

tioned Lord P.'s addresses, and the subsequent days of the ceremony, might be on the tapis about ten days), I can say nothing, for I saw nothing, and all I heard was from Mr. Hanson himself, and that, I think, once only. I had been many years in the habit of seeing my solicitor on my own affairs. He had been my attorney since I was ten years of age. “Causa scientiæ patet.”

It struck me as so little an entrapment for Lord P., that I used to wonder whether the *girl* would have him, and not whether *he* would take the girl.

I am not very well, from a concoction of humours, for which an English physician prescribes a “decoction of Woods” (and Forests too I should think from its varieties of tastes), but it seems epidemical in this vicinity, for half a hundred people have got it, in the shape of swelled faces, and red faces, and all that. I dined with the British minister, Hill, on Saturday.¹ The carriage gave way on my return, and I had to walk three miles (about half of the way *up* hill) in the night, with a bleak wind, which brought on an attack again, otherwise I was better.

I shall be glad to see Blaquier.² I am *not* going to Naples. I thought of it for an instant, being invited there, and Mr. Murray has set the report afloat, with a story about a new “Childe Harold,” because I said that *if* I went there, I *might* write another canto.

All my affairs are going on (in England) not very prosperously. The Noel trustees pay nothing, and nobody. We can't get out of the funds, nor accommodate with Deardon, nor publish (Douglas is afraid, but publish I will, though it were to destroy fame and profit at once. I will not be advised nor dictated to,

¹ At San Pietro d'Arena.

² Captain Blaquier was on his way to Greece in company with Andreas Luriottis who had been to England to plead the cause of the Greeks. An influential Committee had been formed in London to help the cause. It included Lord Erskine, Sir James Mackintosh, Jeremy Bentham, Joseph Hume, and Hobhouse. See *Letters and Journals*, vi. 185.

by public or private). I shall have to come home, and if I do, it sha'n't be for nothing, for I will bring affairs to a crisis with Henry Brougham directly on my arrival, and one or two more of the same kind ; I have nothing on my mind so much as this.

Ever yours and truly and affectionately, N. B.

P.S. You are mistaken on one point. I am leading a very *chaste* life (word under the seal) and time [too] at thirty-five.

“ Long may better years arrive !
Better years than thirty-five ! ”

GENOA, March 31st, 1823.

P.S. I say nothing of other affairs. My object is, as soon as I have assured a few thousand pounds, to purchase an annuity for my own life, and that of my sister ; of course making a provision for the liquidation of my outstanding debts, which cannot be *much now* in England ; and I have no debts abroad.

My health ought to make this an easy purchase, and Augusta has two or three years more than me. What would they give me per cent. (on good landed security) on these two lives ?¹

Compare the proof of the Age of Bronze with the MSS. as the printer has made in the three first paragraphs some strange transpositions.

Byron to Kinnaird

GENOA, April 2nd, 1823.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—Yours of the 21st ultm. duly received. I am glad of the arrival of the packets so far in safety. I have since sent the 14th Canto, and on Saturday the 29th, the 15th Canto also, and a poem

¹ Augusta Leigh's mother, Lady Conyers, died in 1784, four years before Byron was born. Byron's father married Baroness Conyers in 1779, therefore Augusta must have been born some time between 1779 and 1784. She could not have been less than four, and was perhaps as much as eight, years older than Byron. See also *Paradoxes and Puzzles*, by John Paget, 1874, p. 290.

called "the Island" in four cantos, which I hope have arrived also.

I dine with your friends Lord and Lady Blessington to-morrow. On Monday I saw Henry Fox¹ (Lord Holland's son) and was delighted with him; he seems to me, on so slight a glimpse, the *ne plus ultra* of the amiable; even to the very features of his face. Lady Blessington makes a grand eulogium of you, and your *beauty* (a sign that you wear well), but wishes you would ride quieter horses; so do I.

Hunt says you consider the 2nd No. of the "Liberal" a failure, I suppose you mean in sale, for I had a letter from you three days after its publication, in raptures with "Heaven and Earth," and its "*success*," as not only your *own* opinion, but of all those whom you knew.

You can hardly have changed your mind so far, without some reason. I speak as a composition, not with regard to its circulation.

Yours ever and truly, N. B.

GENOA, April 7th, 1823.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—I saw Capt. Blaquier on his way to Greece a few days ago, and have written to Hobhouse by to-day's post on the result of our conversation, which I have requested Hobhouse to communicate to you. If I can, in person or otherwise, do anything for the good cause, I will as far as my means go, but I do not choose to intrude till invited.

I have converted £1500 in circulars into cash, on account of the present great advantage of the exchange here, the gain being between 50 and 60, that is 57 pounds sterling above par on the whole sum now drawn.

I have dined with your friends the Blessingtons, whom I find very agreeable people, and full of your praises.

If I should have to take a turn in the Levant to

¹ Henry Edward Fox, the only son surviving of Byron's friend Lord Holland. He was born in 1802 and succeeded to the title in 1840. He died in 1859. See *Letters and Journals*, vi. 178.

investigate the state of things there, you must reconvert the Exchequer bill into cash in your bank, and let me have by July next as extended a credit as my means, or assets, will justify your prudence in permitting, since everything will pass through your hands during my absence. You see, for many reasons, how anxious I must be to have Deardon's business settled in some way ; you will keep up the insurances, that is a necessary expense. The creditors must wait another year or so, which they may well do, since happen what may to me, they are eventually secure.

As to literary matters they seem hopeless, though I do not see why *you* are so *frightened*, as Henry Fox (Ld. Holland's son) tells me you are. This is to want moral courage, which is strange in one who has so much physical valour as to be rather too temerarious in most things. You, however, might probably dispose of the ten cantos, and the "Island" to somebody or other.

Yours ever, N. B.

I open my letter to say that I have just seen a young man who was clerk to Galignani at Paris. He tells me that of all *my* works, Juan is by far the most popular, and sells best, especially with the women, who send by hundreds slyly for copies. Now pray what is the fright about publishing ? What are you afraid of, the newspapers ?

Byron to Hobhouse

GENOA, April 7th, 1823.

MY DEAR H[OBHOUSE],—I saw Capt. Blaquier, and the Greek companion of his mission, on Saturday. Of course I entered very sincerely into the object of their journey, and have even offered to go up to the Levant in July, if the Greek provisional government think that I could be of any use. It is not that I could pretend to anything in a military capacity. I have not the presumption of the philosopher at Ephesus who lectured before Hannibal on the art of war ; nor is it much that an individual foreigner can do in any other way, but

perhaps as a reporter of the actual state of things there, or in carrying on any correspondence between them and their western friends, I might be of use ; at any rate, I would try. Capt. Blaquiere (who is to write to you) wishes to have me named as a member of the committee in England. I fairly told him that my name, in its present unpopularity there, would probably do more harm than good ; but of this you can judge, and certainly without offence to me, for I have no wish either to *shine*, or to appear officious ; in the meantime, he is to correspond with me. I gave him a letter to Ld. Sidney Osborne at Corfu ; but a mere letter of introduction, as Osborne will be hampered by his office in any political point of view. There are some obstacles, too, to my own going up to the Levant, which will occur to you.

My health, though pretty good, is not quite the same as when it subdued the Olympian malaria in 1810 ; and the unsettled state of my lawsuit with Mr. Deardon and the affairs still in Hanson's hands tend to keep me nearer home.

Also you may imagine that the "absurd woman-kind," as Monk barns¹ calls them, are by no means favourable to such an enterprise. Madame Guiccioli is of course, and naturally enough, opposed to my quitting her ; though but for a few months ; and as she had influence enough to prevent my return to England in 1819, she may be not less successful in detaining me from Greece in 1823. Her brother, Count Gamba² the younger, who is a very fine, spirited young fellow—as Blaquiere will tell you—is of a very different opinion, and ever since the ruin of Italian hopes in 1820, has been eager to go to Spain, or to Greece, and very desirous to accompany me to one or other of those countries ; or at any rate to go himself. I wish you had seen him, you would have found a very different person from the usual run of young Italians.

¹ *The Antiquary*, Sir W. Scott.

² Pietro Gamba.

With regard to my peculium. I am pretty well off ; I have still a surplus of three thousand pounds of last year's income ; a thousand pounds in Exchequer bills in England, and by this time, as also in July, there ought to be further monies paid to my account in Kinnaird's bank.

From literary matters I know not if anything will be produced ; but even out of my own, K[innair]d will, I suppose, furnish me with a further credit if I should require it, since all my receipts will pass through his hands.

You must be aware that it would not do to go without means into a country where means are so much wanted ; and that I should not like to be an incumbrance, go where I would. Now I wish to know whether *there* or (if that should not take place) *here* I can do anything, by correspondence or otherwise, to forward the objects of the well-wishers of the Hellenic struggle. Will you state this to them, and desire them to command me, if they think it could be of any service ? Of course, I must in no way interfere with Blaquiere, so as to give him umbrage ; or to any other person. I have great doubts, not of my own inclination, but from the circumstances already stated, whether I shall be able to go up myself, as I fain would do ; but Blaquiere seemed to think that I might be of some use even *here*, though *what* he did not specify. If there were any things which you wished to have forwarded to the Greeks—as surgeon's medicines, powder, and swivels, &c., of which they tell me that they are in want—you would find me ready to follow any directions, and, what is more to the purpose, to contribute my own share to the expense.

Will you let me hear from you, at any rate, your opinion ; and believe me, Ever yours, N. B.

P.S. You may show this letter to D[ouglas] K[innair]d, or to anyone you please, including such members of the committee as you think proper, and explain to them that I shall confine myself to following

their directions, if they give me any instructions. My uncertainty as to whether *I* can so manage as to go *personally* prevents me from being more explicit (I hear that strangers are not very welcome to the Greeks, from jealousy), except as far as regards anything *I* might be able to do *here*, by obtaining good information, or affording assistance.

April 17th, 1823.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Since I wrote I have heard from Capt. B[laquiere]. He is at Rome, was refused passage through Naples, and must go to Corfu by Ancona. Please to state this to the Committee. They, i.e. B. and his companion, are anxious for me to go up there : and if I can, I will. I have, in the meantime, ordered about a hundred pounds sterling worth of powder, and some hospital supplies to be sent up to the seat of the provisional government.

I have had the enclosed letter from my banker here (Mr. Barry, the agent of the house of Webb & Co., and a very good fellow), but he tells me that we can have a choice of vessels at any time at a more moderate rate. Pray tell me what you think that I should do ; and please to request Douglas K^d to have the goodness (in case I go up) to let me have credit on the most convenient Italian, or Levant places for the whole of my disposable funds ; which ought to be a tolerable sum, including the present year ; and as all my monies must pass through his hands, I suppose that he will not hesitate.

I have not broken in upon anything of the present year, and have still three thousand pounds of my income of 1822. I wish that he could get anything for the Don Juans (he has ten cantos in hand, and an eleventh nearly ready, besides some other MSS.). My going up, far and away, would neutralise the book-selling hostility against me, as being to likely be my latest work.

That, and any arrangement about Rochdale, however scanty in proportion to its actual value, would enable me

to go up with means that might be of some real service ; or even, whether I go or not, enable me to forward the views of the Committee and the Greek people. If I go there I shall do my best to civilize their mode of treating their prisoners ; and could I only save a single life, whether Turk or Greek, I should live “ *mihi carior* ” and I trust not less so to my friends.

Ever yrs., N.B.

GENOA, April 19th, 1823.

MY DEAR H[OBHOUSE],—I saw your speech, which did you great credit, at full length, with Canning’s civil reply. “ *Fas est et ab hoste laudari.* ” I have your letter of y^e 6th, and enclose one just received from Blaquiere, which will “ prate of our whereabouts ” to you, and all friends of the cause. There is no obstacle to my going up, but the “ absurd womankind,” and how absurd they are, as well as those under their dominion, thou knowest by all tale and history, and the experience of several of your friends. It is the more absurd in this case, as the *Pope* and her grandfather (the oldest Count Gamba) are extremely desirous of her return to Ravenna. Her father has been recalled from his exile (on the late rising account in 1820), but been positively told that he is expected to bring his daughter back with him. Her husband *would* forgive, provided that I (a very reasonable condition) did not continue his sub-agent (as the Irish call a middle man) ; and her brother, who is a fine bold young fellow (as he has proved himself more than once), is even more anxious for him and me to go up to Greece, than anybody else, being a thorough Liberty boy. However I hope to prevail upon her to accompany her father to Ravenna ; but she has, it seems, a due share of “ female punctuation,” as Mrs. Malaprop calls it ; and stands out upon sentiment, and so forth, against the will of half the families in Romagna, with the Pope at their head, and all this after a *liaison* of four years and better. Besides at present she has a fit of jealousy of Lady Blessington,

with whom I have merely a common acquaintance, as she is an authoress, and all that.

It is, besides, against her worldly interest in every way, for they (the Pope that is) have proposed to confirm her separate maintenance from her husband, if she will not make it up with him ; but then, says the Pope, and the Santissimo, " You must not live naughtily with a heretic and a Carbonaro, and a foreigner like L[ord] B[yron]." However, I *will* go (" d——n my eye I *will* go ashore,") an't be possible, or do all I can in the cause, go or not. I think of about August, or earlier, for the voyage ; but much will depend on Blaquiere's future letters. If I go, I presume the Committee would give me some regular instructions of what they wish to be observed, reported, or done. I will serve them as humbly as they please. Believe me,

Ever yours, N. B.

P.S. I would tell you (were it not per the *post*) of some *queer* things brooding here. I have had some propositions made to me, but I answered, " You must first shew yourselves more capable than you did in the last events, before I can take upon me to answer, either for myself, or for any prospect of assistance from the people of England."

P.S. Tell Douglas, that when anything is settled I will let him know *what* sum I should like to take, in credit, and on what houses. His answer was as handsome as could possibly be, and as usual with him in such matters. I will try not to abuse either the means, or the purpose for which they are intended.

Byron to Kinnaird

April 24th, 1823.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—The only will hitherto found of Mr. Shelley's is in England, so inform your applicant. I have written on the subject, which is all that an absent man can do, and I have received a not very

clear answer, which is all that an absent man can expect.

Messrs. Hanson and Godwin can inform you of the particulars, and whether or not his will is available, or when, if ever, it will be so. This is all that I know of his affairs. I regret that I cannot give a clearer account of them, but this is the most satisfactory that I have been able to obtain of his, or of any other persons, including my own, for which latter fact, I refer to your honourable worship, who will I presume confirm this eulogy of lawyers and trustees.

Yours ever truly, N. B.

GENOA, May 21st, 1823.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I am doing all I can to get away, but I have all kinds of obstacles thrown in my way by the “absurd womankind,” who seems determined on sacrificing herself in every way, and preventing me from doing any good, and all without reason; for her relations, and her husband (who is moving the Pope and the Government here to get her to live with him again) and everybody, are earnest with her to return to Ravenna. She wants to go up to Greece too! forsooth, a precious place to go to at present! Of course the idea is ridiculous, as everything must there be sacrificed to seeing her out of harm’s way. It is a case too, in which interest does not enter, and therefore hard to deal with; for I have no kind of control in that way, and if she makes a scene (and she has a turn that way) we shall have another romance, and tale of illusage, and abandonment, and Lady Carolining, and Lady Byroning, and Glenarvoning, all cut and dry. There never was a man who gave up so much to women, and all I have gained by it has been the character of treating them harshly. However I shall do what I can, and have hopes; for her father has been recalled from his political exile; but with this proviso, that he do not return without his daughter. If I left a woman for another woman, she might have cause to complain,

but really when a man merely wishes to go on a great duty, for a good cause, this selfishness on the part of the "feminie" is rather too much.

Ever yrs., N. B.

Byron to Hobhouse

GENOA, May 24th, 1823.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I mentioned to you some little time ago, that I had heard from Karellas.¹ As soon as I was favoured with the wishes of our committee, I wrote to him *again*, requesting any information which he thought might be useful to his countrymen, that I might transmit it to the Hon. Secretary. I enclose you *both* his letters. The second is a curious one; he says "that he cannot comply with the request, as he is prevented," but whether by the Pisan or Tuscan Slaves in office, or by his own people, he does not state. He then concludes by a demand for 100 crowns for *himself*, which would be paying high for *no news*.

I really hardly know what to think of these our worthy friends, but am willing to lend them a hand, though I could wish to hear something from Blaquierre first, from the seat of action. I forwarded to you his letter from Corfu; and wrote to you a day or two ago, enclosing one for Mr. Bowring. I am ready to contribute, and do what may be deemed best, to any extent in my power, but I hope that the rest of his compatriots will not, like Karellas, refuse information for his country's benefit, and demand a loan for *themselves* [as] individuals.

Yrs. ever, N. B.

[GENOA] May 28th, 1823.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—The enclosed notes, one from Dr. Alexander an English physician, and the other from Mr. Barry the banker, will show you that I have not been idle in the good cause.

The medical stores "for 1,000 men, for two years"

¹ Nicolas Karrellas, a friend of Hobhouse.

are not very dear, since their cost will hardly amount to seventy pounds sterling, and I shall either send, or take them up with me, with other things for the service, as I said before, purchased and conveyed at my own expense, of course.

I hear no more of the committee,¹ except what I see in the papers ; and am not aware whether they have any course of conduct to suggest to me, or no. You will let me know I presume.

I read your various speeches in the “Times.” I shall collect and send what information I can, as directed ; and am,

Ever yours, N. B.

P.S. The question of the Greeks mentioned in Mr. B[arry]’s note are from some supposition of their own, as I never gave out that I was to be the distributor of the committee ; but merely that I had offered my services in *general*, for any purpose in attainment of their object.

Byron to Kinnaird

[GENOA] June 8th, 1823.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—Enclosed is a true copy of Capt. B[laquiere]’s letter to me from Zante, this day received. Of course, if the next communication from the Greek seat of Government at all resemble the present I shall proceed to join the cause forthwith. You can communicate as much of this letter of Captain B.’s as you think may be proper, to the committee.

“ Hospital supplies ” I have already ordered for the [use ?] of a thousand men for two years at least, as Dr. Alexander states them in a letter which I forwarded to you some time ago.

They did not cost above seventy or eighty pounds sterling.

The Artillery will be thought of, but it may be difficult to purchase it in time to take up with me. But I

¹ He was elected a member of the Greek Committee in London in March but did not receive the notice of Election till 23 May.

will convey them what I can, and put my resources at the disposal of the cause when there ; and this is all that an individual can do. I shall proceed to avail myself of your handsome credits in my favour, according to circumstances.

Ever yours, N. B.

P.S. Address to me at Genoa. My letters will be forwarded in case I should have sailed before their arrival. You will, of course, continue the insurances on Lady B.'s life, as being quite requisite. In all other respects, you must retain all incoming monies, to force the credits with which you have furnished me.

I have to thank Hobhouse for his kind and somewhat daring quotation from me to his electors the other day. He must be a bold man to venture it during my unpopularity among the English.

Your brother is here, looking well, dines with me to-day, when we shall drink your health and prosperity.

Pray make some arrangement with Hobhouse to include him in, or devolve on him the power of attorney, in case of anything occurring ; but I hope you will take care of yourself and do well.

[GENOA] June 9th, 1823.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—By Saturday's post I sent you a letter from Captain Blaquiere to me, and if his *next* confirms it, I shall go up to join the Greeks forthwith. We cannot exactly make out *what stores* they *chiefly* want, but I suppose that money will be the most useful, as they then can apply it as occasion dictates. I would suggest to the committee's consideration, to send some *Congreve rockets* speedily ; and engineers to instruct the Greeks in their application.

Depend upon it, they would have an effect. Also, if [Sir Robert] Wilson quits Spain, send him up ; he would do wonders probably. It is rather strange that I hear nothing further, either from Hobhouse, or the committee.

Yours ever, N. B.

P.S. Your brother dined with me lately, and went this morning; to-morrow I dine with Mr. Hill,¹ to meet (I believe) the Marquis of Hastings. If you write, address as usual to Genoa, as the letters can be forwarded if I should precede them.

[GENOA] June 16th, 1823.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—Yours of the third arrived this day. Pray take care of your health. I do not like the “torpor” you mention. Perhaps before I can receive your answer to this, I shall be on my voyage to the Levant. I am bargaining for my passage in an English vessel. You can address to Genoa. Mr. Barry will forward all letters. I sent a copy last week of Blaquier’s very pressing [word torn off] for me to go up to Greece without delay.

As to my affairs, my anxiety is as much on your account as on my own, as I should not like to over-draw, and yet may have occasion for all the means that I can muster, as I should not like to give the Greeks a *half helping* hand, but rather aid them as much as I can.

As to the MSS. you really *must* publish them whenever I have sailed. My distance will diminish the hatred of my enemies, and the object on which I am employed will do us no dishonour, at least it ought not.

Mr. Murray ought to give something for “*Werner*” as I before said. You are aware how seldom I can hear from you for some time. I received your letter of credit, but shall also be obliged to use the former *one* (for two thousand), as the four thousand alone will hardly be sufficient. I have also some circulars, and shall take up what I have in Mr. Webb’s bank, and sell my furniture, books, &c. &c. &c., and the schooner²

¹ The British Minister, at Genoa.

² The *Bolivar* was sold to Lord Blessington for four hundred guineas. She was eventually lost on the rocks near the Pineta at Ravenna. See *The Idler in Wales*.

and snuff boxes, that I may do my best in supplying the "sinews of war."

I recommend my affairs to you and am,

Yours ever, N. B.

Byron to Hobhouse

June 19th, 1823.

DEAR H[OBHOUSE],—You will see by the enclosed that I have engaged a vessel. Your committee have printed my letter ; with what view or advantage is more than I can conjecture, as I hear nothing *from* and little *of* them. D[ouglas] K[innaird] says nothing on the subject. I expect to sail early in July. Accounts are contradictory ; the Greeks at Leghorn say first one thing, and then another. From Blaquiere I have not heard since the letter from Zante, which I sent to D[ouglas] K[innaird] a fortnight ago. I expect soon a letter from him, from the seat of the Government.

I shall go up and see what is to be done ; if good, well—if otherwise—I can console myself with the motive.

Yours ever, N. B.

Mrs. Shelley to Byron

ALBARO, June 1823.

DEAR LORD BYRON,—I have received a letter from my father to-day, and should be glad to see your Lordship, if possible, before the post goes out to England. If it be not inconvenient to you, would you come up this evening at your usual hour ? or will you mention a convenient time when I can see you at your own house ?

Pardon this annoyance, your own kindness has caused it—and I hope that that kindness is sufficient to render you *not very impatient* under the trouble it has drawn on you.

Salute Madame Guiccioli for me.

Truly yours, MARY SHELLEY.

CASA NEGROTO, Wednesday.

Sunday.

DEAR LORD BYRON,—The more I read this Poem¹ that I send, the more I admire it. I pray that your Lordship will finish it. It must be your own inclination that will govern you in that ; but from what you have said, I have some hopes that you will. You never wrote anything more beautiful than one lyric² in it, and the whole, I am tempted to say, surpasses “your former glorious style”—at least it fully equals the very best parts of your best productions.

Truly yours, M. W. SHELLEY.

[ALBARO, *circa June 1823.*]

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—I could not well wait for you yesterday, but I do not intend to write to my father until next week. In the interval, perhaps, you can come up here ; or if not, if you will let me know when I can conveniently see you, I will come down to Casa Saluzzi.

I am very grateful to you for your kind offers yesterday. In part I must avail myself of them to get to England ; but I know too well how many claims you must have on you, and have been myself too long in a situation where more limited in our means, yet no one was satisfied with the little we did, not to have pity on the situation of one to whom all look up to as their prop ; and be assured that I shall presume as little as possible on your kindness, and your demonstrations of good will will not cause me to tire those feelings, although I own that the expression of them is highly gratifying to me.

I hear that you have begun your 16th Canto. I trust that your Lordship will make use of me, in the only way I can be of service to you, as long as my residence near you gives you the opportunity.

Truly yours obliged, MARY SHELLEY.

Wednesday.

¹ Werner. She copied the MS. for him.

² “The Isles of Greece.” *Don Juan*, Canto III.

[ALBARO, circa June 1823.]

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—I am indeed at a loss to conceive of what is at present to be done ; there is no law to help me, and certainly no feeling that can be of service to me with a man¹ who could make that insolent and hard-hearted proposition about my poor boy. *That* did a little overcome my philosophy. If the persecuted *Liberal* still continues, that may in some degree prevent my burthening any one in my present evil fortune—if not, some other means may be thought of. Perhaps if I were in England he might be shamed into doing something ; but the difficulty of getting there, and the dearness of living when arrived, would, I think, destroy all good that could accrue from such a journey ; though doubtless my being in Italy does my cause no good.

I sent a copy of the letter last night to father, that I might as soon as possible have his opinion and advice upon it. Your Lordship's also would of course be gratifying to me ; but I fancy that you feel as I do, that the affair is hopeless.

I have been expecting “Don Juan,” but I fear your Lordship's illness has been the cause of its delay ; perhaps this fine weather will cure you.

Very truly yours, MARY SHELLEY.

ALBARO, Tuesday.

[ALBARO, circa June 1823.]

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—The 15th Canto² was so long coming, even after I had heard that it was finished, that I began to suspect that you thought that you were annoying me by sending me employment. Be assured, however, on the contrary, that besides the pleasure it gives me to be in the slightest manner useful to your Lordship, the task itself is a delightful one to me.

Is Aurora a portrait ?³ Poor Juan ! I long to know

¹ Sir Timothy Shelley.

² *Don Juan*.

³ Aurora Raby, *Don Juan*, Canto XV, Stanza 43.

how he gets out or rather into the net. Are the other Cantos to be published soon ?

I have had no letters. I wait with no pleasant expectation for the result of my father's deliberations. It little matters which way he decides, for either to go or stay are equally disagreeable to me in the situation I now am. But the *present state* of things cannot and shall not last, though I see but dimly what is to come in lieu of it. I think it will be England after all—that will be best for my boy's health, and perhaps the least unexceptionable part for me to take.

I hope this fine weather has cured all your *incommodi*.

Truly yours obliged, MARY SHELLEY.

ALBARO, *Sunday*.

Will you lend me those verses on Lady B. that Hunt had a few weeks ago ?¹

ALBARO, June 1823.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—I am afraid I annoy you very much by intruding myself and my affairs on you. I had hopes at one time not to have troubled any one ; but fate is inimical to me.

I have received a letter from my father, who thinks well of what I mentioned to your Lordship when I last saw you, rather more than a month ago, of a letter to Lord Holland. I cannot go to England until after Mrs. Hunt's confinement, and you seemed then to think that in the interim it might be well if my father saw Lord Holland, introduced by a letter from you. Do you still think so ? and would you write ?

I send you my father's letter, that you may judge better. You will smile at the idea of Hunt's wishing to keep me. I am no such God-send to any one—and he would find a better consoler—though I have entire hope that it will not be needed, and all will go well.

I am sufficiently out of spirits. The idea of maintaining myself in England I own frightens me—I—

¹ Probably the *Charity Ball*.

who nine days out of ten am too agitated and miserable to write at all. However, I hope my fortitude will reawaken some of these days, and in the meantime I have sufficient for the present—that is to say, if the 3rd number of the *Liberal* comes out.

Again I entreat your Lordship to excuse me. Your own kindness is indeed my only excuse; retract that, and I shall have none—and without one I will not sin.

Yours obliged, MARY SHELLEY.

Monday, ALBARO.

I would come down, but I have found that there is small chance of seeing you when I do.

Have you the Posthumous Works of Gibbon? and could you lend me them?

ALBARO [no date].

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—Your letter is very good, and I cannot express to you how obliged I am by your kindness. You have been, and are, very kind to me now that I have so few friends, that I feel it and want it most.

You have not mentioned in your letter that you enclose by my desire the certificates my father mentioned; but as those must be got in England, I think it is best as it is.

When you send to the post, will you have the kindness to send Lega to me for letters?

Most truly yours obliged, MARY SHELLEY.

Tuesday.

ALBARO [no date].

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—The letters I received today were from Jane,¹ Clare, and Mrs. Gisborne, nothing about business in any of them; indeed, I do not expect to hear from my father before the expiration of a week. Mrs. Gisborne saw him; she says, “I saw him alone; we spoke of you and of the ever-to-be-

¹ Jane Williams, widow of Captain Edward Williams, drowned with Shelley.

lamented catastrophe without any expression or outward sign of sorrow. I thought that he had erred in his memorable assertion, and that we human beings really were stocks and stones. When Peacock called upon me, a tear did force itself into my eye in spite of all my struggles."

But I do not write to your Lordship to tell you this, but to mention another subject in her letter. She says, "When Mr. Gisborne went to Harrow to accompany a son of Mr. Clementi's who is placed in the Harrow School, he saw the grave of poor Allegra. This was precisely the day your father called on me; the funeral had taken place the day preceding. There was a great outcry among the ultra priests on the occasion, and at the time they seemed resolved that the inscription intended by her father should not be placed in the church. These gentlemen would willingly cast an eternal veil over King David's infirmities and their own; but the world will peep through, even though poor Allegra should be without the honours of her inscription."

Would you tell me the book, chapter, and verse of this quotation for the epitaph? ¹

I send your Lordship two letters from Hunt; he says that "There appears some mistake about the Preface to the 'Vision'; but he hopes the *realizations* on the 7000 will compensate for all defects."

¹ The tablet which Byron wished to have placed near Allegra's grave was to have borne the following inscription:

In memory of

ALLEGRA

- daughter of G. G. Lord Byron
who died at Bagnacavallo
in Italy, April 20, 1822.

Aged five years and three months.

"I shall go to her, but she shall not return to me."

2d Samuel, xii. 23.

For full particulars as to the objections raised against erecting any monument in the church see *Letters*, vi. 70-72.

Jane writes from Paris. She has been very ill, but intends proceeding to England without delay. She desires to be remembered to you, and begs me to remind you of your promise of bidding Murray send her your works.

This then is all my news. Teresa's visit caused me to be out yesterday when you called, otherwise I am always at home at that hour, and when you feel inclined to prolong your ride to this house, you will be sure to find me.

I have nearly finished copying your *savage Canto*.¹ You will cause Milman to hang himself—"non ce altro rimedio." I was much pleased with your notice of Keats. Your "Fashionable World" is delightful—and your *dove*. You mention eight years—exactly the eight years that comprise all my years of happiness. Where also is he, who gone, has made this quite, quite another earth from that which it was? There might be something sunny about me then; now I am truly *cold moonshine*. Adieu.

Truly yours, MARY SHELLEY.

Monday.

ALBARO [no date].

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—I have received a letter this morning from my father. He says, "I saw young Hanson to-day. His father has not yet seen Whitton. He is over head and ears in an unlucky business of his own respecting his daughter, the Countess of Portsmouth. This business is now almost every day before the Chancellor. The young man, however, has promised me an interview with his father in a day or two. I told him I was writing this day to Italy. You shall hear from me the moment I know anything material on the subject." I have plenty of patience in all this, and yet one way or another I shall be very glad when I come to a certainty on my affairs. However, thanks to your lordship having prevented my journey to England, I can wait without any inconvenience for some time longer.

¹ *Don Juan*, Canto XI, St. 58 et sqq.

I have had also a letter from Jane. She is arrived, is in good health, and is at present residing with her mother. She desires to be kindly remembered to you.

This is all my news—except that both my father and Jane say that Peacock does not appear lukewarm, but assiduous in my affairs. This is, indeed, of much consequence, as he is on the spot. Besides that, it is always a pleasant thing to receive kindnesses, and I need not say how truly I thank you for those that you have shewn me. I am quite of the *old school* with regard to gratitude, and I feel it very deeply whenever my friends are good enough to shew affection for me ; and I am not afraid of being misinterpreted when I express it.

Truly yours, MARY SHELLEY.

Wednesday, CASA NEGROTO.

On 13 July 1823 four of Byron's horses were shipped on board the *Hercules*; and, on that evening, Byron, Pietro Gamba, Trelawny, and Dr. Bruno, with six servants, embarked. Sails were flapping idly against the masts in a dead calm the whole of that night, and on the following day Byron went ashore. He revisited the now deserted rooms at the Casa Saluzzi with feelings which are not difficult to understand. The Guiccioli had departed with her father, and a deep sense of loneliness overcame every hope of future happiness. He would willingly have abandoned his chivalrous plans, but fear of ridicule restrained him.¹ On the 15th July the anchor was once more weighed and the old brig was towed out of the harbour by boats furnished, out of compliment to Byron, by some American vessels lying there. But at night a storm arose and drove the old tub back into the harbour of Genoa. On the following

¹ Hobhouse (*Recollections*, iii. 153) says that "Barry told him that when Byron was driven back to Genoa, he confessed to him that he would not go on the Greek Expedition, even then, but that '*Hobhouse and the others would laugh at him.*'"

evening the *Hercules* was got under way once more, and in five days the party landed at Leghorn. During their stay of two days at that port, Mr. Hamilton Brown and two Greeks—Prince Shilizzi, and Vitiali—joined the party. Trelawny says, “from what we heard from Hamilton Brown we altered our plan, and instead of Zante, we decided on going to Cephalonia.” The reason for this being that Sir Charles Napier—the only man in office favourably disposed to the Greeks—was in command there. On 23 July the *Hercules* once more was under way, and towards night of the 2nd August the brig was brought to an anchor in the roadstead of Cephalonia. Early in September Byron left his quarters on board the *Hercules*, and removed to a village named Metaxata, situated amidst magnificent scenery, whence the following letter was written. [R. E.]

Byron to Hobhouse

METAXATA, September 11th, 1823.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—This letter will be delivered by Captain Scott, of the “*Hercules*,” who brought me up into these parts, and has behaved very well. He is a fine tough old tar, and has been a great amusement during our voyage ; he is moreover brother to two of your constituents, and as such to be treated with all due respect, also some grog with which he regularly rounds off most hours of the four and twenty. He is a character I assure you, as you will perceive at a single glance.

I have received your, and the committee’s letters, to both of which this will serve for present answer. I will endeavour to do my duty by the committee, and the cause.

On our arrival here, early in August, we found the opposite coast blockaded by the Turkish fleet. All kinds of reports in circulation about divisions amongst the Greeks themselves—the Greek fleet not out (and it is not out yet as far as I know)—Blaquiere gone home

again ; or at least on his way there, and no communications for me from the Morea or elsewhere. Under these circumstances, added to the disinclination of Captain Scott (naturally enough) to risk his vessel among the blockaders, or their vicinity, without being insured for the full value of his bastimento, I resolved to remain here for a favourable opportunity of passing over ; and also to collect, if possible, something like positive information.

In the meantime, I made a tour over the hills here in our old style, and then crossed over to Ithaca, which as a pendant to the Troad, a former Greek traveller would like to see. I was much gratified by both ; and we have, moreover, been treated in the kindest manner by all the authorities, military and civil, from Colonel Napier, the resident (whose name and fame you are aware of), the officers of the 8th, and in short by all our own countrymen.

Their hospitality both here and in Ithaca was indeed rather impressive : for dinners kill a weakly-stomached gentleman. They also insisted on lodging us, but I would not so far abuse their good nature, and am here in a very pretty village, between the mountains and the sea, waiting what Napoleon calls the “ March of Events.” The events, however, keep their march somewhat secret, but it appears nearly certain that there be divisions ; and that Mavrocordato is *out* (some say *in* again) which were a pity, since he is the only civilised person (*on dit*) amongst the liberators.

The Turkish fleet has sailed, leaving fifteen Algerine vessels to cruise in the Gulph.

Mr. Brown and Mr. Trelawny are since then gone over in a boat, to a part of the coast out of blockade, with letters from me to the Greek government at Tripolitza ; and to collect information. There is little risk for small boats ; but it is otherwise with larger vessels, which cannot slide in everywhere, as the Mussulmans are not very particular. Count Gamba, a young man about twenty-three, is here with me, and is very popular amongst the English ; and is, I assure you, a

fine fellow in all respects. I have written to apprise the Greek government of the probable approach of the vessel indicated by the committee ; and prepare them to receive its continents. I wrote, soon after my arrival, to Marco Bozzari, in Acarnania, and at a considerable expense sent the letter by a small boat which ran through the blockade. He answered, desiring me to come over, and stated that he meant to give battle to the Turks next day (after the date of his epistle), which he did, and was killed, but his party gained the victory ; and he behaved most gallantly, by all accounts, till mortally wounded. This was very vexatious on all accounts, as well for the general loss of the individual, for I was particularly recommended to him (the chief of the Suliotes), and I cannot have the same confidence in his successor, who is less known.

I took forty Suliotes here into pay ; got their arms (through Colonel Napier's intercession with General Adam), and sent them to join their countrymen a few days ago, when the blockade was partly done away with. They have cost me a tolerable number in dollars, and the price of their passage (somewhat high), &c., but it was thought best that I should wait for directions from Tripolitza, before I fixed on the place where I ought to proceed with the approbation of the Greek Government.

I have also spent some hundred dollars in assisting the Greek refugees in Ithaca, and providing for a Moriote family, who were in great distress.¹

The Turks are in force in Acarnania, but you cannot depend upon any *accounts*. The report of the day is contradicted on the morrow. Great divisions and difficulties exist ; and several foreigners have come away in disgust, as usual. It is at present my intention to remain *here*, or *there*, as long as I see a prospect of advantage to the cause ; but I must not conceal from

¹ Many poor families had taken refuge at Ithaca, from Scio, Patras, and other parts of Greece. Byron handed 3,000 piastres to the Commandant for their relief, and transported a family in absolute poverty to Cephalonia, where he provided them with a house, and gave them a monthly allowance. (*Byron : The Last Phase*, p. 48.)

you, and the committee, that the Greeks appear in more danger from their own divisions than from the attacks of the enemy. There is a talk of treachery, and all sorts of parties amongst them ; a jealousy of strangers, and a desire of nothing but *money*. All improvements in tactics they decline, and are not very kind, it is said, to the foreign officers, &c., in their service.

I give you this as report, but certainly I cannot say much for those I have seen here ; the slave is not yet improved by his Saturnalia. As you are aware what they were before, I need say little on the subject.

Pray write and say how you are. I am better for my voyage, and stood the hot sun on the hills of this island, and of Ithaca, like a dial.

Ever yours, most truly, N. B.

September 14th, 1823.

P.S. I have sent over to Messolonghi some medical stores for the wounded there. Metaxa (the commandant of the town) is very pressing that I should go over there ; but I must first have an answer from the Tripolitza government, and also keep a look out for the arrival of the committee's vessel. When these things are settled, I may as well be in one place as another I suppose, though I have as little cunning in fortifying a besieged town as "honour hath skill in surgery."

Colonel Napier told me yesterday that there is a story in the island Corfu, &c., "that he and I had a quarrel about *arms* on board my vessel, that it was seized after some resistance or opposition, &c., &c., &c.," in short, a damned lie ; which I merely mention that you may contradict, and laugh at it, if you hear anything of the kind. Napier says if his commission could be saved to him that he would go over too. You know he is a famous soldier, one of Sir John Moore's "Well done, my Majors ! " left for dead at Corunna, and all alive and martial at this moment. He is besides an excellent fellow, greatly liked, and a thorough Liberal.

He wishes me to state to the committee, *quietly*, recollect, his wish to have some communication with them. He would be just the man for a *Chef*, if it could be managed.

METAXATA, ISLE OF CEPHALONIA,
September 27th, 1823.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—By the “Hercules” I wrote at some length, as you probably will know before the arrival of this, which will be delivered by Mr. Peacock, a gentleman who has been in the Morea on business, respecting a proposed loan to the *soi-disant* government. I beg you to introduce him to Mr. Bowring; his information may be very useful, as also his influence with the society which he represented here; he is withal gentlemanly and intelligent. Perhaps his friends might combine with the committee on the score of the loan to the Greeks.

By the enclosed (or rather annexed) mass of papers, you will see the present state of things. There is private matter mixed up with the correspondence; but you and Mr. Bowring can extract the useful, and public part, for the information of those interested in the subject. The fact is, that matters are in great disorder. No less than three parties and one conspiracy going on amongst them at this moment; a few steps further, and a civil war may ensue. On all sides they are (as you perceive) trying to enlist me as a partizan; but I have hitherto declared that I can recognize only the Greek Government, without reference to the *persons* who may compose it; and that, as a foreigner, I have nothing to do with factions, or private preferences of individuals.

I have not yet gone to the Main, because, to say the truth, it does not appear that I could avoid being considered as a favourer of one party or another; but the moment I can be of any real service, I am willing to go amongst them. Mavrocordato is out, and his friends are mustering people for him wherever they can; he has now agents in the islands, &c., but the enclosed

papers will show you the state of affairs, without further comment of mine.

When the Committee's stores come out, I will direct them to where they may be *really* wanted, which is no easy point to ascertain, for all the agents of the Greek Government are said to *peculate* to the extent of their opportunities ; in short you will hear from all quarters but an unfavourable account of their proceedings. For all this I do not despair ; and shall continue up here watching opportunities to serve the cause ; but little will be done till there is a regular force of some kind.

Ever yours, N. B.

P. S. Tell Douglas K. that, except the payments to keep up the *insurances*, he must not let any monies of mine be converted to Hanson's or others' purposes (the fellow has had thousands already), but to keep everything in bank for the credits of mine of the present and ensuing year. Of all things, to do anything amongst these fellows, *money* is the most essential ; and I have no wish to spare mine, though I will not allow a six-pence to be expended except to a public purpose, and under my own eye.

METAXATA, CEPHALONIA, October 6th, 1823.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I write a few lines by a private conveyance, to inform you that I have sent you two packets ; whence you will extract information for the Committee ; one by Capt. Scott, of the brig Hercules, and the other by Mr. Peacock, agent for a society on his return from his mission to the G[reek] G[overnmen]t.

The documents are in considerable number, and will tell you all that is requisite, up to their respective dates.

The Greek disputes amongst themselves are *in statu quo*.

The fleet is at length said to be at sea, but has done nothing. Indeed there has been (except in the case of Bozzari, who was killed in Rumelia) a kind of contest of *inaction* on both sides, during the present year. But

the Turks have at length come down in force (sixteen thousand they say) on Messalonghi ; which, however, is stronger than it was last year, when they were repulsed in a similar attempt.

There is a squadron of some sort, in sight from our windows in the village here, at this present writing ; but whether Greek, or Turk, is not easily made out ; two sail, one three-masted vessel, and apparently ships of war.

We are very anxious for your Committee Argo, with its continents and Congreve rockets, which I will direct to the place where they seem needful. I have not had any answer yet from the Greek G[overnmen]t, but I have heard of a packet, directed to me by their order some time ago, which is said to have been searched, or destroyed by some of the factions or their adherents, at Zante. When Mrs. Fry has done with Newgate,¹ it would not be amiss if the Committee would send her into Greece, she would find plenty of exercise for her *re-moralizing* talents, by all accounts.

It is my duty and business to conceal nothing, either of my own impressions, or of the general belief upon the score of the Greeks, from the Committee. When I add that I do not despair, but think still that every exertion should be made on their behalf, in the hope that time and freedom will revive for them what tyranny has kept under, but perhaps not extinguished ; I conceive that you will not despond, nor believe me desponding, because I state things as they really are. They want a regular force to support a regular system quite as much as to repel their enemies. In the interim, every man who can pay, or command from one hundred to a thousand gillies, is independent, and seems to act for himself. When I state to you that I have had half-a-dozen offers of different kinds, and from different parties, to put myself at the head of some hundred boys of the belt, and of the blade, all of whom might be

¹ Mrs. Elizabeth Fry, the prison reformer. It was a visit to Newgate which inspired her philanthropic efforts.

maintained for any purpose with less means than those which I can at present command, you may judge for yourself how far there is any actual order or regularity. I have hitherto steered clear of such matters ; and avoided committing myself with any of the parties, being a peaceable man ; but really, if they go on in this way, and I get up in a bad humour some morning, there is no saying what one may be provoked into. I have got over most of the Suliotes (their best *παλίκαρια*), who were here to recruit the ranks in Acarnania. One of their bravest chiefs (Drako) went a few days ago, and is to let me know (he, as well as Kosta Bozzari, Marco's surviving brother) the exact state of *their* affairs. They have lately lost another chief in action, Giarella, whose widow is here. She sent her little boy, a child of four years old, to pay me a visit the other day ; he is a sturdy little lion's whelp, with an immense head, and neither cries nor laughs like other children ; but sits still, and blows out his lips, and snorts as the Highlanders do when they are angry. He already talks of revenging his father's death on the followers of Mahomet according to the good old custom which, of course, his mother patronises. His organ of combativeness seems considerably developed ; and he will doubtless, if he lives, be a credit to the carnage line of business.

Of my present position here, I have little further to say. I hear that the Canteen has got as far as Zante, but I neither know the name, nor the probable time of arrival of that same Caravel, or Argosie, which is to waft Mr. Parry and his fire-engineery to the seat of warfare.¹ Blaquiere has probably got back amongst

¹ William Parry, at one time a firemaster in the Navy, was engaged by the Greek Committee in London to provide a laboratory and instruct the Greeks in every part of the business of defence. He was to construct a gunpowder manufactory, and to supply everything needed for service both on shore and afloat. He reached Missolonghi in Feb. 1824, but without either money or men to carry any of his projects to fruition. Byron promoted him to the rank of Major, to the infinite disgust of the German officers who had volunteered to serve the Greek cause.

you ; he had evaporated before I arrived here. My own motions will partly depend upon the arrival of your brigade, or, it may be, on the answer I may have from the actual Greek Government, now in congress at Salamis (Colouri, *hodie*), or Egina. I have two correspondents there awaiting a reply. Another English gentleman volunteer has gone over to Messalонghi this day, or going. It is not yet sure that it *is* besieged ; and to say the *truth*, no *truth*, or very little, is to be extracted from the Greek accounts of any kind till *long* after any given occurrence.

I have had a letter from Bowring (to whom make me remembered) dated August 18th, in which he mentions (among other matter) the possible, or even probable prospect of a loan for the Hellenes ; but, at the same time, imposes on me to impress on them the necessity of the most *sancro-sacred* (an Italianism of mine—pardon it) observance of engagements, and of a specialty their regular payment of interest. As Henry Morton says to Cuthbert Headrigg, I doubt “that the *penny fee* will be a hard chapter,” for the actual members of the G[overnment] do not pass for being great dilettanti in the matter of pecuniary punctuality. But this by the way. I doubt that the news of Mavrocordato’s being out, and their other slight discrepancies, will enhance the scruples of our monied people. Besides, the deputies to treat for the said loan are *not yet* embarked ! I have written, and railed, to urge their *immediate* departure ; but no ! they are not gone, nor, for aught I know, going.

Mr. Peacock (an important personage, for he was authorized to offer large sums) came away much disgusted with them, as almost all foreigners have hitherto done. I laboured to put him in a better humour with them, and perhaps partly succeeded.

I mean (unless something out of the way occurs to recall me) to stay up in the country itself, or the neighbourhood of Greece, till things are either better, or hopeless, and in every case will take advantage of circumstances to serve the *Cause* if the patriots will

permit me ; but it must be *the Cause*, and not individuals or *parties*, that I endeavour to benefit.

Yrs. ever, N. B.

CEPHALONIA, 8^{bre} 16th, 1823.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Enclosed is a further report from the Morea. It is full, and supposed to be authentic on the state of parties there. You and Mr. Bowring can form your own judgments, and use your discretion in laying it before the committee. The enclosed is a copy, only altered into *better* Italian, the original not being very pure, but the sense, and the tenor of the expressions are still retained as nearly as possible.

We have a difficult part to play in the meantime ; the deputies have *not* sailed ; so there will be little likelihood of a loan to the Greeks when once their discords are bruited abroad. We want a military foreign force, and a *military* man to head them. Gordon has not done wisely in not coming ; he is reckoned a good soldier, and with a thousand men at his back, and a little patience, might have done much, but *alone* he would do little. They won't obey a stranger unless he has a force of his own sufficient to make himself respected ; so say all the foreign officers who are returning by dozens. A *Greek engineer* (an *élève* of Lord Guilford's) told me a little time ago, that they minded *him even* no more than a post, and that otherwise he could have taken Patras. The captain of an English ship of war told me that with a couple of *brigs* he would undertake to reduce the castles of the Gulph of Lepanto, i.e. those at the entrance.

I shall continue here till I see when, and where I can be of use, if such a thing at least be practicable. I have hitherto only contradictory accounts. If you send out a military man, he will have every cooperation from me ; or if you send out any other person, I have no objection to act as either his coadjutor, or subordinately, for I have none of those punctilio.

Yours ever, N. B.

*Byron to Kinnaird*CEPHALONIA, 8^{bre} 29th, 1823.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I have sent to Hobhouse various documents and dispatches, from which he can furnish the proper information to the committee. The Greek government have invited me to Napoli di Romania, and I expect to proceed there in November. You had better address to me by Genoa (to Messrs. Webb and Barry). My letters reach me sooner through that channel, as vessels sail frequently.

I shall take your advice about the reverend care of my purse and person, as far as is consistent with propriety. The former has not yet suffered much, having only been lightened of about a thousand dollars, partly an aid to the Suliotes, and partly to some of the refugees, and also some expenses for sending boats with dispatches, &c., and the latter is for the present in tolerable plight.

You, gentlemen of the committee, must exert yourselves, and I will second you as well as I can ; but your newspaper accounts are highly exaggerated, for neither Turks nor Greeks have done much this year. I shall continue to state things to you all exactly as they are, or appear to me, and the best way *not* to despond is perhaps to commence with not being over-sanguine. The cause is good, and I think eventually *safe* (if the Holy Alliance leave the Greeks to themselves), and I am inclined to believe that the committee may be of essential service in forwarding supplies, or monies, and obtaining a loan for the Independents ; but there is still a good deal to be done, and more than is imagined in your part of the world, for proof (or at least assertions) of which I refer you to high authorities amongst the Greeks themselves, transmitted to me by Hobhouse.

Ld. Sidney Osborne came over yesterday from Corfu to meet me ; and I dine with the Government Resident, Col. Napier, to-day to meet him. He came up (i.e. Ld. S.) to Metaxata, where I now am, yesterday, and

we had a luncheon, and some talk together. I then rode back with him towards Argostoli.

He is in good preservation, and as clever and *insouciant* as ever. He tells me that Alvanley is at length “rectus in curia” with his creditors, and in possession of his long expected uncle’s property. Tell him that I have discovered a text in St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, chapter X. of such unimpeachable veracity, that I have been converted into a firm believer of all the rest. It is this (vide chapter X.) “*For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek,*” these are the literal words, and what is more to the purpose, the literal truth. Some of their bankers tried to make me pay interest for *my own money* in *my own possession*, which I came to spend, for their cause, too ! and this I think equals or beats the tribes of Israel, unless perhaps the *ten*, who are still supposed to exist in the heart of Asia. But I “sorted them I trow,” having the staff for the present in my own hands.

Believe me truly your affectionate, N. B.

P.S. I hope you have retained the best counsel for the H[unt]s ; have you received the 12th Co. of D. J. sent on the 14th 10bre 1822 ? I do not know what security we can have for H[unt]’s accounting for the profits but he has a property in the *Examiner*. A fair account of profit or loss would perhaps be the better way, supposing it to be accurately stated.

I have had a letter from my sister, wishing me *not* to leave anything by my will to *her* children !! I do not know if I mentioned to you a similar circumstance ; when Allegra died I was going to leave the five thousand pounds which I had originally bequeathed to that infant to Madame La Comtesse Guiccioli, which she declined in the most positive, and indeed, displeased terms, declaring that she should consider such a bequest as not only an injustice to my daughter by Lady B., and to my sister’s family, but as a posthumous insult to herself, and persisted so, that I have been obliged to leave my will as it was. Is not this odd ? *Two*

women of different countries concurring upon the same point ! It is true Madame G. has her separate allowance (by the Pope's decree) from her husband, and will have a considerable jointure at his demise, but it is not unhandsome conduct nevertheless.

10^{bre} 23rd, 1823.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—A Greek vessel has arrived from the squadron to convey me to Messalonghi, where Mavrocordato now is, and has assumed the command, so that I expect to embark immediately.

Address, however, to Cephalonia (through Messrs. Webb & Barry of Genoa, as usual) and get together all the means, and credit of mine we can, to face the war establishment, for it is “in for a penny, in for a pound,” and I must do all that I can for the ancients. I have advanced them four thousand pounds, which got the squadron to sea ; and I made them forward the Deputies for the loan, who ought to be soon in England, having sailed some weeks ago. I have already transmitted to you a copy of their agreement, &c., and to Hobhouse and Bowring various dispatches, with copies or originals of correspondence, more or less important. I am labouring too, to reconcile their parties ; and there is some hope *now* of succeeding. Their *public* affairs go on well ; the Turks have retreated from Acarnania without a battle, after a few fruitless attempts on Anatoliko ; and Corinth is taken. The Greeks have gained a battle in the Archipelago ; and the squadron *here* has taken a Spanish corvette, with some money and a cargo ; in short, if they can obtain a loan, I am of opinion that matters will assume, and preserve a steady and favourable aspect for their independence.

In the meantime I stand paymaster, and what not ; and lucky it is, that from the nature of the warfare, and of the country, the resources even of an individual can be of a partial and temporary service.

Col. Stanhope is at Messalonghi ; probably we shall attempt Patras next. The Suliotes, who are friends of mine, seem anxious to have me with them, and so

is Mavrocordato. If I can but succeed in reconciling the two parties (and I have left no stone unturned therefor) it will be something; and if not, why, we must go over to the Morea with the Western Greeks, who are the bravest, and at present the strongest; now that they have beaten back the Turks—and try the effect of a little *physical* advice, should they persist in rejecting *moral* persuasion. I suppose you know the state and names of the parties from my letters to Hobhouse and Bowring?

Once more (as usual), recommending to you my affairs, and more especially the reinforcement of my strong-box, and credits from all lawful sources and resources of mine, to their practicable extent (and after all, it is better playing at Nations, than gaining at Almack's, or Newmarket, or piecing, or dinnering), and also requesting your Honour to write now and then one of those pithy epistles “touching the needful,” so agreeable to the distant traveller,

I remain, ever yours, N. B.

Byron to Hobhouse

10^{bre} 27th, 1823.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I embark for Messalonghi. Douglas K[innair]d and Bowring can tell you the rest. I particularly require and entreat you to desire Douglas K[innair]d to send me credits to the uttermost, that I may get the Greeks to keep the field. Never mind *me*, so that the *cause goes on*; if that is well, all is well. Douglas must send me *my money* (Rochdale Manor included, if the sale is completed, and the purchase money paid); the Committee must furnish *their money*, and the monied people *theirs*; with these we will soon have men enough, and all that. Yrs. ever, N. B.

P.S. Mavrocordato's letter says, that my presence will “electrify the troops,” so I am going over to “electrify” the Suliotes, as George Primrose went to Holland “to teach the Dutch English, who were fond of it to distraction.”

CHAPTER XIV

LAST DAYS

(1824)

THE last months of Byron's life have already been so fully described in Lord Ernle's (Mr. Rowland Prothero's) edition of his works, in Mr. Edgcumbe's *The Last Phase*, and elsewhere, that there is no need for further record of the circumstances here, more especially as the documents relating to this period are very scanty in Lady Dorchester's collection. Most of Mr. Hobhouse's information is already published in his *Recollections of a Long Life*.

I will add but one quotation from the record of Mr. Marshall MacDermott of Adelaide, Australia, who was in the 8th Regiment, and quartered at Argostoli in 1824. He describes Byron as very temperate in his mode of living and Trelawny as a "big talker." "Trelawny made light of Byron's swim across the Hellespont, and challenged him to swim from Cephalonia to the mainland. The challenge was accepted, but Trelawny drew back."

Mr. MacDermott describes Byron's devotion to the Greeks and their cause: "As to the means, he was desirous of receiving advice." "Some Suliote refugees, driven out of Albania by Ali Pasha's severity, were on the island, and some 400 enlisted under Byron."

Byron entrusted Mr. MacDermott with the MSS. of the last three cantos of *Don Juan*, which he brought to Hobhouse.

Byron to Kinnaird

MESSALONGHI, February 21st, 1824.

[Printed in Moore's *Life of Lord Byron*.]

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I have been here some time after some very narrow escapes from the Turks, and also from being shipwrecked (we were twice upon the rocks), but this you will have heard, truly or falsely, through other channels, and I *won't* bore you with a long story. I have also been very seriously unwell, but am getting better, and can ride about again, so pray quiet our friends on that score.

For public affairs here I refer you to Stanhope's and Parry's reports. We are making the best fight we can, and still have good hopes of the Greeks and of their cause.

The deputies will or *should* have arrived by this time.

I drew the other day on your house for three thousand pounds to carry on the war, but my intention of taking the field in person has been interrupted for the present by a smart illness from which I am slowly convalescing.

It is not true that I ever *did*, *will*, *would*, *could* or *should* write a *satire* against Gifford, or a hair of his head, and so tell Mr. Murray. I always considered Gifford as my *literary* father, and myself as his "prodigal son," and if I have allowed his "fatted calf" to grow to an ox before he kills it on my return, it is only because I prefer beef to veal.

I shall be very glad to hear a good account of Hunt's, and of all other *accounts*, for we have expenses here, I assure you, and I may require my Rochdale as well as Kirkby Mallory proceeds, not omitting my funded products, for aught I know, unless they get (the Greeks that is to say) their loan, and perhaps even then. I must do the thing properly and handsomely, and so far I have succeeded in supporting the government of Western Greece for the present, which would otherwise have been dissolved, but Stanhope and Parry can tell you the particulars. If you have got the eleven

thousand and odd pounds (as you say you expected on 9bre 23rd shortly to receive them) these, with what I had in hand, and my income for the current year, to say nothing of contingencies from Hunt's proceeds, or others, will or might enable me to keep "the sinews of war" properly strung. If the deputies are honest fellows, and obtain the loan, they will repay the £4000 (as agreed upon) advanced in 10bre, and even then I shall save little, or indeed less than little, since I am maintaining the whole machine nearly (in *this* place at least) at our own cost. But let the Greeks but succeed and I don't care for myself.

Yours ever, N. BN.

P.S. I have obtained from the Greeks the release of eight-and-twenty Turkish prisoners, men, women, and children, and have sent them to Patras and Prevesa at my own expense.

MESSALONGHI, March 13th, 1824.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—I write without much certainty that the letter will reach you, for the plague has broken out this morning in the town, and of course precautions will be taken in the islands, and elsewhere.

It has been supposed to be communicated from the Morea. Be that as it may a man from thence has just died of it, as my physician says, whom I have just seen, as well as the Prince Mavrocordato. What the event may be cannot of course be foreseen.

To resume. It would be advantageous, nay even necessary, for me or for my heirs, that you should sell out of the 3 per cent. consols now, while they are so high. It might make a difference of ten thousand pounds in our favour on the original sum invested. Surely Bland would consent to this, and wait for the occurrence of a mortgage at 4 per cent., or take one on fair security. I wish much to impress this upon your mind.

I hope that you have arranged the Rochdale business as well as you could, and completely according to your

wishes. I hear that Hunt has been found libellous ; we must pay the expenses of his fine. If he had consented to my coming over as I requested, this would not have fallen upon *him* ; but to this he frequently objected, declaring that they would not prosecute the author, but the publisher.

I shall be the more anxious to hear from you as the communication will probably be interrupted for some time to come. Whatever may [happen] to me, believe me that I ever am, and was, and will be (as long as I am at all),

Ever yours very faithfully and affectionately,
NOEL BYRON.¹

The following letters, the last addressed to Lord Byron by his lifelong friend Hobhouse, are of pathetic interest, and must speak for themselves.

It appears from the journal which Count Gamba kept in Greece, that at noon on 18 April 1824 he entered Byron's room for the purpose of handing him a letter from Archbishop Ignatius which contained the information that the Sultan of Turkey had proclaimed Byron, in full divan, an enemy of the Porte. But Byron's condition was at that time so precarious that Gamba did not dare to show him the letter. "A few hours later," says Gamba, "other letters arrived from England from Lord Byron's most intimate friends, full of good news, and most consolatory in every way, particularly one from Mr. Hobhouse, but he had then become unconscious—it was too late!" The letter in question is printed below—never, alas ! to reach eyes that would have brightened at the sight of it. It is dated March 15th, 1824, and was found in Byron's room

¹ This was the last letter but one to Douglas Kinnaird (see *Letters*, vi. 362). The last known letter was addressed to Charles Barry on 9 April 1824, ten days prior to Byron's death. See *Letters and Journals*, vi. 374.

after his death. There is one sentence which Byron, who believed himself detested and neglected, would have read with pleasure.

"All friends make many enquiries after you, and hope you will take care of yourself in Greece, and return here after the good fight has been foughten."

Those words, coming from his truest friend, would have softened that sense of utter loneliness which oppressed him, and would have given even greater force to his dying utterance :

"*Io lascio qualche cosa di caro nel mondo.*" [R. E.]

Hobhouse to Byron

LONDON, February 23rd, 1824.

MY DEAR BYRON,—I have just received the dispatches sent through Mr. Peacock. He had contrived to be a long time on the road, and he had also opened the papers, saying he had your leave. The gentleman is not in good odour here, being attached to a certain Count *de Wintz*, who seems inclined to trade on his own account, and has squabbled with the Greek Committee respecting his projected loan. This Count has come very inopportunely at the moment when the Deputies arrived, as his concerns and theirs appear to clash, and may perhaps injure the credit of both, so as to preclude the getting of any loan at all. Baring at first seemed inclined to listen to the Deputies' proposals, but he now, I hear, holds off, and the matter is at a stand. We are, however, going to discuss the subject on Saturday next, and perhaps may put things into a better train. The death of King Tom¹ has been hailed here as a great

¹ This was the name given to Lt.-General Sir Thomas Maitland, who, after varied service in India, the West Indies, and other parts of the world, was in 1815 appointed Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands. A reference to him in this capacity will be found in Byron's Journal (printed in *Letters and Journals*, vol. vi. 250). Sir Charles Napier calls him "a rough old despot." He framed a charter for the Ionian Greeks, and did much to help their material prosperity. He died at Malta on 17 Jan. 1824.

benefit to the cause, and I have reason to believe that Canning wishes well to the Greeks, and would do anything that he can without compromising his neutrality with the Turks and the Levant Company. We have contrived to let him know that the French are intriguing for the sake of getting an island or two put into the hands of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, who, under their patronage, are to be made the head of a sort of league in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, and are, if occasion serves, to direct the Greek Confederacy to the purposes of the Holy Alliance. The whole plot has been found out, and Canning, on hearing it, expressed, so I am told, a resolution to prevent any such enterprise, and rather to take the Greeks by the hand himself than prevent their becoming the tools of France. If you learn anything on this point, pray let us know. I have read all your papers ; they are extremely interesting, notwithstanding their dates, which, thanks to Mr. Peacock, are no later than September, so that we have news nearer to us by two or three months. Nothing can be more serviceable to the cause than all you have done ; everybody is more than pleased and content. As for myself, I only trust that the great sacrifices which you have made may contribute (which I have no doubt they will) to the final success of the great cause. This will indeed be doing something worth living for, and will make your name and character stand far above those of any contemporary. At the same time, do not, I pray, expose yourself to dangers, either by flood or field—“*Non missus ad hoc.*” If you go to the seat of government, go to advise and control, but do not go to mix in the struggle, either domestic or external, of the combatants. You may be sure, even from the representation of Mavrocordato’s agents, that you will have a commanding influence, and may speak with a certainty of being attended to. After what you have done for Messolonghi, you must be looked upon as a deliverer. If you think the name of the Greek Committee of any service, of course you will use it whenever you may think fit. The paper of advice respecting the

differences amongst the Greeks has been sent out. If you like it, deliver it ; if you think it can be amended, alter it, and give in another in name of the Committee. You will find Stanhope a good creature, willing to do what you please ; and, I am sure, from what we have seen of your operations, that what you please will be the best thing to be done. I am in no fear now of your taking a sudden leave of the cause and country. Matters seem to wear a more promising aspect than they did in September. You are quite right in *lending* your £5000. If the loan succeeds, you will of course retake your money immediately. The accommodation was everything ; you are called upon for no more ; indeed, not for so much as you have done. I can assure you that all the world here thinks what I say. Above all, take care of your health, and do not go to the feverish marshes of the Morea, where you were once so ill. The bearer of this letter, Capt. H. Molyneux, Lord Sefton's son, will bring out a parcel containing all the articles which you directed me to procure. He goes to Corfu, and I trust will soon forward his charge to Cefalonia. If you want anything else, let me know. D. Kinnaird has your temporals in his hand, and Crabtree tells me that everything is going on much to your advantage. No more money will be paid to Hanson than he can fairly demand ; and I hope that is none at all. The great thing is to get out of his books, and to have done with him. I think it is well you did not lose your whole estate by him.

I hope you are well, and, I repeat, will keep so. The older I grow, and the sicker I grow, the more I am sure that health is the only certain blessing : with it, one can bear anything : without it, one can enjoy nothing. What say you ?

Mrs. Leigh has had a good deal of sickness in her family. She has now, poor thing ! eight children, with very slender, or rather no means of educating those who are growing up. I do not know what would have happened had she been turned out of the Palace. Whenever I see her, she is most anxious in her enquiries

after you. Many enquiries and good wishes for you I also meet with from many others.

Farewell. Write whenever you can. Give me any commissions, and they shall be punctually executed.

Ever very truly yours, JOHN C. HOBHOUSE.

LONDON, February 23rd, 1824.

MY DEAR BYRON,—I have received your letter on the eve of your embarking for the continent, and pray heaven to prosper your honest undertaking. I wrote the other day by Captain Molyneux, and hope you have had my letter ; it contained intelligence of the arrival of your dispatches. Since then I have delivered them over to the Greek Committee. The Committee on hearing them read, came to this resolution : “ Resolved unanimously, *That Mr. Hobhouse do convey to Lord Byron the sense which the Greek Committee entertain of the great services rendered by his Lordship to the cause of Greek Independence, and do express their gratitude for this fresh proof of his exertions in behalf of that glorious cause.*”

I was desired to add whatever I might think right on the same head, but I have only to say that all whom I speak to out of the Committee are equally delighted with what you have done and doing, and are most anxious for your safety and success.

So I say do not expose yourself to unnecessary perils ; your friends the Suliotes are brave fellows doubtless, but their mode of warfare, “ *reculer pour mieux sauter,* ” must very often leave an obstinate Englishman in the lurch. The Franks, who have hitherto been in action with the Greeks, complain of being often left in a sort of awkward squad, quite alone in the heat of battle ; of course you know this and will act accordingly. Let us hear of you by every opportunity. Leicester Stanhope I learn is your *avant courier* ; he is a good fellow, but no great Greek, as you will soon discover. By this time you have heard of the success of the Greek loan. The Deputies might have had two millions instead of £800,000 if they had pleased. Joseph

Hume has subscribed for £10,000, so you may be sure the thing is a safe thing, and good at Change. We all expect to hear of great doings, and I can tell you for certain that Canning has a very kindly feeling towards the cause. His great friend Gladstone attended a public meeting the other day at Liverpool, and spoke warmly in behalf of the Greeks.¹ Who knows but next autumn may see a regular English Minister at the court of the President of the Hellenic Republic ? I shall positively, if I can contrive it, come out myself the moment Parliament is prorogued, and if we should shake hands under the walls of Adrianople, there would, as the jester Scrope used to say, be a trait and an event for the biography.

We have a new Review set up, called the "Westminster Review," for Radical politics, which bids fair to succeed, as 1500 have been sold of the first number, and a second edition is in the press. Bowring is the editor. One or two of the articles are very good indeed, as good as anything going. I suppose you occasionally see the "Edinburgh" and "Quarterly," and Scott's novels (also quarterly). The last of the latter, St. Ronan's Well, a complete failure. We have another trial at an Oriental romance by Morier, called "Hadji Baba." Sir Gore Ouseley says it is perfectly Persian, but I cannot relish it, and certainly it is vastly inferior to Anastasius. Ugo Foscolo thinks of coming out to Greece immediately in order to collect materials for an account of the war, and if possible, to be of service—I suppose in the Tyrteian line, for I never heard that he was very "cunning at fence," though an ex-colonel of Napoleon's school. If he does come out, he will repair to your head-quarters. You will find him, if you become acquainted, a very extraordinary person,

¹ John Gladstone (1764–1851), created a Baronet in 1846. A Liverpool merchant. He was the chief supporter of Canning at Liverpool in 1812. Member for Lancaster in 1818. He wrote against repeal of the Corn Laws, but afterwards changed his views under Peel's influence. He was the father of William Ewart Gladstone.

not over agreeable, but full of colloquy of the highest kind. I never heard him make a common-place remark in my life. He has made many enemies and few friends here, being a true poet in that particular, and rather impracticable.

Of Tom Moore I have seen nothing lately. I inclosed your letter to him yesterday. Douglas Kinnaird is shining away at the India House, and wants me to purchase £2000 stock to hear him speak, but I am as fond of speaking as a grocer is of figs, having enough thereof at my own shop. All your affairs go on prosperously, as Kinnaird tells me, but I am sorry to say that I have not very favourable news of your daughter Ada. She has been sickly for some time, tho' I hope the sea, where she now is—at Hastings, I believe, will do her good—I will let you know in my next letter how she goes on. The very mild season must be in her favour. I do not exactly know by what hand to send this letter, but I shall consult Mr. Bowring to-morrow.

Farewell, dear Byron, and believe me,

Ever yours most truly, JOHN C. HOBHOUSE.

LONDON, March 15th, 1824.

MY DEAR BYRON,—Although I have written to you twice very lately, yet as Kinnaird tells me a messenger is going off to you to-morrow, I must send a few lines, if only by way of reply to your last note, delivered by the Greek Deputies. Little did those worthies know the contents of the scytala¹ which they carried, and which they presented in all due form, together with a letter from his Highness Mavrocordato, conveying thanks for all services performed and unperformed in behalf of the cause. I am delighted on all accounts that your gross of green spectacles has turned out such a good bargain, and that you will recover

¹ A σκυτάλη, in days of ancient Greece, was a method used by the Spartans for sending secret dispatches. It consisted of a staff, round which a strip of writing material was rolled slantwise. The message was then written upon it, but became unintelligible until the paper or leather was re-rolled round a staff of exactly the same size.

your horse, Blackberry, into the bargain. Nothing would have given me greater pleasure than seeing you set out upon your journey to the *Fair* at Messalonghi. I hope you did not forget to cock your hat with pins. We have not heard from you privately as yet since your arrival on the terra firma, or rather the marshes of Western Greece, but we see by the French journals that you have been received in an appropriate manner, and made a member of the Senate, and President of Strangers. What the latter office may be I know not, but hope it may not prove as difficult to discharge, and as thankless when well filled, as the conduct of partizans and foreigners generally proves to be. I can assure you here that the Greeks look upon your Avatar as a perfect godsend ; one of them said to me in so many words, "*It is Providence who sent that man to our help.*" Of course Bowring has told you of the general good inclination of Canning to the cause ; I believe he will do, or let it be done—which is the same thing—all that he can, without coming to a complete rupture with the Turks or Russians. It will be of the utmost service, if you can discover any intrigues of the French, or any of the allies, with the Greeks, to let us have the details, so as to enable us to communicate them to Mr. Canning. He certainly is very much alive on that score ; on the whole he is a popular Minister—popular because he succeeds to Castlereagh, popular because he did not go to war for Spain, popular because he will go to war for South America, popular because he is but faintly opposed by the "gentlemen opposite," and popular because he is strongly opposed by the gentlemen who sit next to him—I mean Peel and company. The session is going on peaceably, but I think I see elements of discord, such as the proposed renewal of the detestable Alien Bill for instance. In France government carries everything before it ; only 23 Liberals returned in all the elections. In Spain the presence of the French army alone prevents cutting of throats. In Italy there has been dreadful proscriptions ; Greece in fact is the only point to which, in the old world at least,

we look with any satisfaction. We are going to give a great public dinner to the Greek Deputies on the first of May, and we anticipate good news previously to that day for announcement on that occasion. Thomas Campbell has bespoken of me the giving of your health, and as I daresay he will do it well, perhaps it is advisable to put the duty in his hands. Tom Moore, I believe, will not be in town. The loan continues at a small premium, and it would have been much higher had it not been for the roguery of those trying to get up a Cypriote loan—Peacock, de Wintz, Hendricks, and Co. We have, however, stopt them this time, and hope we shall altogether prevent future operations. We have also detected one Doctor Schinas in detaining a trifling subscription meant for his countrymen, and employing it for keeping up the war in his own housekeeping department. He was a member of our Committee : we were obliged to expel him yesterday. I am sorry to say that your patriot, generally speaking, is rather lax in his moralities as to money matters. We have had a fellow here in long petticoats, playing off an Archimandrite or some such character, and pretending his whole family had been massacred first, and then sent him to negotiate a loan of a million of scudi—to bury them, I suppose ; but my gentleman was soon detected, and has, I believe, decamped. You will no doubt have a great deal of difficulty in seeing that the loan is applied to proper purposes ; but if the Greeks carry their point with the sword, I think the gold concern will arrange it perhaps more easily than we now expect. Even if rogues get the money—and rogues fight well—the lender will get paid, and that is all that lenders have a right to look for. I like the Deputies. Lauriottis seems a clever man, and Orlando an honest man. I have no chit-chat for you of any kind, nor do I believe there is anything stirring in the world in which you used to live. All friends make many enquiries after you, and hope you will take care of yourself in Greece, and return here after the good fight has been foughten. I have

not heard of your daughter lately, but hope hearing nothing is a good sign. Your monied matters, Kinnaird will tell you, are going on swimmingly ; you will have—indeed you have—a very handsome fortune ; and if you have health, I do not see what earthly advantage you can wish for that you have not got. Your present endeavour is certainly the most glorious ever undertaken by man. Campbell said to me yesterday that he envied what you are now doing (and you may believe him, for he is a very envious man) even more than all your laurels, blooming as they are. Go on and prosper ; let me have a letter from you when you can find time to write, and believe me

Ever truly yours, JOHN C. HOBHOUSE.

APPENDIX A

IN order to complete the series of letters to Lady Melbourne for the reasons stated in the Preface, I add a few short undated letters from Byron to her.

Tuesday Even.

DEAR LADY M.—I have received a letter from Ly C. which has been *opened*—the contents profess to have accompanied some money which (God knows why) she supposes herself to owe me but (I thank heaven) it has been pilfered by the way.

This is all her own imagination and my only motive in writing this is to vindicate myself from the meanness of being supposed to receive or accept that to which I have no claim.

Will you use your interest to induce her not to torment me with such transactions; the person present when I received the letter saw that it had been opened and contained *nothing*—at which I rejoice—but do beg sincerely to have no more of this for I most certainly am not one of her creditors and she talks of some further shillings and pence as due to me of which I *know nothing* and bequeath them to those who may have more right to her bounty.

Believe me dear Ly M^e, Yⁿ ever, B.

P.S. As the best way to comply with your last request I have (or rather) *shall* send one of the pictures to Ly B[essborough] the other the moment I can extract it from a trunk not at present in my rooms and for the letters I wait the pleasure of any female relative or Ly C. herself. I think my own might as well be returned as is usual on such occasions; particularly as on the last similar one in July I destroyed a great number and on requesting my own was *refused*!

DEAR L^r M^r,—I trust that L^r C. has by this time reappeared or that her mother is better acquainted than I am, God knows where she is. If this be the case I hope you will favour me with one line—because in the interim my situation is by no means a *sinecure*, although I did not choose to add to *your* perplexities this morning by joining in a *duet* with L^r B—. As I am one of the principal performers in this unfortunate drama, I should be glad to know what my part requires next?—seriously I am extremely uneasy on account of L^r C. and others. As for myself—it is of little consequence. I shall bear & forbear as much as I can—but I must not shrink now from anything.

6 o'clock.

This much I had written when I received yours—not a word of or *from* her. What is the cause of all this, I mean the *immediate* circumstance which has led to it? I thought everything was nice & quiet in the morning till the apparition of L^r B.—if I see or hear from her Ldy. B. shall be informed, if *you*—pray tell me, I am apprehensive for her personal safety, for her state of mind,—here I sit alone, & however I might *appear* to you, in the most painful suspense.

Ever yⁿ, B.

MY DEAR L^r M^r,—In answer to L^r B. I have only to observe that if she will abide by the consequences, I will not see C. at all—& it was with the greatest reluctance & something of *disgust* that I ever consented, with which I beg she may be made acquainted.

I regret very much that I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you at L^r Ossulstone's this evening to whom I must request you to furnish me with a *proper* excuse. The fact is I have made a resolution (*weak* to the extent of L^r Blarney's anathema) not to go anywhere but—no matter you will plead a sudden cold in my behalf which will shine in your description.

Believe me, dear L^r M^r, Ever Yⁿ, B.

DEAR LADY MELBOURNE,—If you would permit me to see you for a very few minutes tomorrow at your own hour I think I could convince you by something like proof

how far the “*perversion of principle*” which is indeed the “unkindest cut of all” has been justly brought forward. I cannot much boast of my religious or moral code but my opinions in conversation I generally keep to myself, & in this instance I cannot plead guilty.

I really feel very sincerely your kindness on this occasion, and I will not again intrude upon it, or even *now* if I trouble you too much.

It is singular enough that one whose whole life has been spent in open opposition to received opinions should be charged with hypocrisy.

Ever y^r, B.

Saturday Even.

DEAR L^r M.—That I am not trifling with you but have sincere business of some consequence the enclosed note from my solicitor will convince you—which though a *secret*—I would tell you if my life depended on it rather than you should *doubt me* under the circumstances in which poor L^r B. is placed. . . . The moment I can arrange this, & I will not wait in the hopes of further or better proposals, I shall leave town.

Y^rs ever, B.

P.S. You can have the goodness to state the real fact to L^r B. & C. . . . I do assure you I have L^dr B.’s comfort more at heart than my own convenience even in this a cast of some moment.

You will return me this note at your leisure.

Monday.

MY DEAR L^r M.—Your letter is quite a *relief* & all I hope is, that she may fall into what she calls love at the fête, or into anything that may keep her in some order. When you get the picture I will send her request & you may promise whatever you please or she requires—except a conference.

Blake in the course of month will perform the part of a Gnome better than even your dexterous La—ship.

All these fooleries are very well at the beginning—but I don’t understand them at the winding up of these concerns. Her letter is burnt according to order. The seclusion from your society is one and not the least weighty

of the 500 reasons I have for wishing her safe in the country or quiet in town. Adieu for the present. I wish you well through *her* & all your approaching fatigues.

Believe me Y^{rs} ever, Dear L^y M., B.

DEAR LADY MELBOURNE,—At two or perhaps a little later I shall have the honour of waiting upon you, as indeed I would have done before had I imagined that you wished it.

Believe me respectfully y^r obliged frd,

BYRON.

Friday.

DEAR L^y M.,—I send you four brace of *grouse* from my moors—just arrived from Rochdale & I hope fresh.

I have been signing the N^d contracts today, & that business is happily terminated.

Ever y^{rs}, B.

DEAR L^y M.,—In justice to L^y C. I must declare that she mentioned no names—nor had I reason to believe that she alluded to you—but I wrote so fast & my ideas were so confused that God knows what I said, or meant, except that she never did nor can deserve a single reproach which must not fall with double justice & truth upon myself—who am much much more to blame in every respect—nor shall I in the least hesitate in declaring this to any of her family who may think proper to come forward. No one has a right to interfere with *her* but yourself & M^r L[amb]. With me the case is different—to them *I* will answer . . . & if she is to be persecuted for my faults—to be reproached with the consequence of a misplaced affection but too well returned—by any but *you* & *yours* (who have acted so differently with a kindness which I did not believe to exist in human nature) I cannot & will not bear it, without at least taking my own just share of the consequences. In the mean command me—& dear L^y M. comfort & be kind to her, you *have been*, she owns it with the greatest gratitude, in every thing of this kind the *man* is—& must be most to blame—& I am sure not less so in this instance than every other. . . . Act with me as you think proper—

I seek no excuse—nor evasion—I have given you my *word*, it shall be observed—& I am sure L^d C. will be the last to make me break it.

Y^r ever, B.

P.S. Forgive this scrawl. I have been so hurried with lawyers, auctioneers—buyers & sellers this morn, besides *this* agreeable accompaniment—that I hardly know what I am about.

Monday Even.

A “person of the least consequence”! You wrong yourself there, my dear L^d M.—and so far she is right—you know very well, and so do I, that you can make me do whatever you please without reluctance—I am sure there exists no one to whom I feel half so much obliged—and for whom (gratitude apart) I entertain a greater regard. With regard to her, I certainly love—and in that case it has always been my lot to be entirely at the disposal of “la regnante”; their caprices I cannot reason upon—and only obey them. In favour of my acquaintance with you there is however a special clause, and nothing shall make me cancel it, I promise you. I meant to have paid you a visit on Saturday in your box—but I thought it possible C. might be there—from her I find two epistles—in the last the old story of the interview, to which if she still harps upon it I have no objection—she desires me not to go to L^d Ossulstone’s—I was not asked—she was there, I presume, for she talks of going away if I came. But I can’t help laughing at the coincidence of objections in the late and present to my going there—both unnecessary—for the presence of the one or the absence of the other would operate sufficiently as a dissuasive. I am just returned from Harrow, where I managed to get a headache, which that I may not communicate I will close this sheet—ever, L^d M.,

Yours most truly, B.

P.S. C.’s letter is half in rhyme—an additional proof that she is not in earnest—at least I know from experience one may begin with it—or end—when the subject is dead or changed and indifferent, but during the meridian it is improbable—all is happiness and nonsense.

APPENDIX B

LADY CAROLINE LAMB

IT is commonly supposed that no correspondence between Lord Byron and Lady Caroline Lamb took place after his marriage. The following letters, though undated, evidently belong to this period, and are given as examples of the infatuated admiration for Byron which still possessed Lady Caroline.

I scarcely dare hope that I shall not offend—however I care not, I must write one line. I must indeed, for I have suffered very, very much—though I cannot presume to hope anything I can say will have effect, yet do hear those who may advise you better, and whatever may have occurred to occasion a quarrel between yourself and your wife, let no pride or resentment on your part prevent an immediate reconciliation. Go to her—whether the cause be little or great—it must be made up—nothing can do it but an interview. Lord Byron, you will no doubt be angry at my interfering where I have no sort of right or interest, but I have witnessed some scenes that I cannot forget and the agony I suffer at this moment from suspense and alarm is not affected. If you knew what odious reports people circulate when men part from their wives, you would act in this instance prudently—you would not try to irritate Lady Noel or to speak with harshness to Lady Biron [*sic*] who loves you would you but conciliate. I know you and fear you, and fear that you will be too offended and too proud to listen to those who would advise you. I have disbelieved all the reports till now, but still I trust they are of far less consequence than some pretend. I care not to know or to hear one word about it, but that it is made up, and if you chuse to mistake the motive which now prompts

me to write this—you may if it please you—it will not alter the truth and I feel it is not a wrong one.

Could you know what some say you would really be on your guard. Farewell. Believe me,

With regret and obediently Y^r friend and Cousin,
CAROLINE.

. . . You say in your letter to Lady M. something as if I were Lady Byron's advocate and confidante. I believe you will find yourself utterly mistaken. I do not fancy she would even extend her compassion to a reprobate like me, and though from my soul I pity her, as I knew that which ought to have made me fly to her and prevent her marriage, yet some day you will find out that Lord Byron's own imprudence alone betrayed to her a thousand circumstances which to this hour I believe Lady Noel and M^{rs} Claremont have not the remotest idea of. When you suspect me ask yourself if there are no others who had more interest than I had in causing this disunion, and whether my faults do not judge of a heart that has disdained every mean revenge and never will adopt that but in one case, when by him that made me I will disclose all even upon oath and die the next moment [*unfinished*].

. . . amongst those who have most warmly, most zealously supported you against every attack, William Lamb has been the foremost—oh Byron believe it both himself and me and all our family would gladly bear any calamity, any reproach to save or serve you. Lady Melbourne is unwell and low, we have neither of us been out once since this report (not on account of it, but because she is ill). She disbelieves every word against you, and if I tremble more than her—think not at least that I judge you—don't rashly credit any lie or invention that old Devil Lady Milbanke may invent—don't even think that Lady Biron may know because she suspects, or if it be a letter deny it at once. When to deny it is a virtue—and this is one—be firm and do not let mistaken friends gain your confidence.

I scarce know what I say, this I know that my Brother W^m told a man this morning—when he spoke unkindly of you that he thought him both mean and cowardly for doing so, and William Lamb at Brooke's said as far as my denial can have had any effect I have said stoutly and without enquiry that all such reports were false—believe

me, Lord Byron, we all honour you and regard you with attachment and interest that is not to be altered, and though my misconduct and unhappy circumstances have estranged us you will never find more affectionate relations and friends than in this house.

I must think Lady Biron's conduct blameable and Lady Noel's shameful, whether it were a mere error or a crime—it is not for the Mother of Annabella to act thus—but don't be severe, and whatever happens insist on seeing her—all the words in the world are not worth an interview.

One promise I ask of you. Suppose people tell you anything is known that you think of consequence—swear to me that you will be firm: deny it calmly and to all do not—do not fancy because every appearance is against you that it is known. See your wife, and she cannot have the heart to betray you—if she has she is a devil—and in mercy be calm. Could you know what your Aunt suffers you would write to her or see her. God bless and preserve you.

With much respect and truth,

Y^{r^s} CAROLINE.

Lord Byron hear me, and for God's sake pause before you rashly believe any report others may make. If letter or report or aught else has been malignantly placed in the hands of your wife to ruin you, I am ready to swear that I did it for the purpose of deceiving them. There is nothing, however base it may appear, that I would not do to save you or yours from this. Do not—oh do not believe those who would lead you for one moment to think she knows anything for certain—be firm, be guarded, resolve upon seeing her. There is nothing a wife cannot and ought not to forgive. I can never believe that she will betray you. The curse of God will fall on her and her alone if she does. I know not whether it may appear wrong or right to say so—but this I know—that if my death could at this moment serve you, little prepared as I am, I would seek it. If it is a mere letter I will swear I wrote it as a forgery—as anything if it can but prevent her believing anything against you—all I ask is this—be circumspect, don't let even your bosom friends know anything, and let it please [end of fragment].

APPENDIX C

MISS MILBANKE'S OPINION OF BYRON'S POETRY

THE following letters containing Miss Milbanke's opinion of Byron's poetry are printed in *In Whig Society* (pp. 161-3), by Mabell, Countess of Airlie.

To Lady Melbourne from Miss Milbanke

1813.

I have just been reading the *enlarged* Edition of *Giaour*, and think the additions very beautiful. The description of Love almost makes *me* in love. Certainly he excels in the language of Passion, whilst the power of delineating inanimate nature appears more copiously bestowed on other poets. Perhaps he has not displayed his excellence in that line only because it has not so much occupied his attention. In the *intellectual* he is truly sublime, yet I cannot believe that his Genius has yet attained its maturity. There is a progressive improvement in his writings. I shall be glad of his stay in England as I may hope to have some share of his agreeable society next year in London. After the lapse of nearly two years since the declaration of his wishes, it is not probable that they should continue in a sufficient degree to occasion mutual embarrassment. I consider his acquaintance as so desirable that I would incur the risk of being called a Flirt for the sake of enjoying it, provided I may do so without detriment to himself—for you know that his welfare has been as much the object of my consideration as if it were connected with my own. To shew you that Invention does not languish in this country I was told a few days since that Lord Byron had gone to establish himself in some remote island with a younger daughter of Lady Oxford's, whom he was to educate & ultimately to marry.

To Lady Melbourne from Miss Milbanke

February 12, 1814.

I have just finished the Corsair—am in the greatest admiration. In knowledge of the human heart & its most secret workings surely he may without exaggeration be compared to Shakespeare. He gives such wonderful life and individuality to character that from *that* cause, as well as from unjust prepossessions as to his *own* disposition, the idea that he represents himself in his heroes may be partly accounted for. It is difficult to believe that he could have known these beings so thoroughly but from *introspection*.

Who hath seen
Man as himself—the secret spirit face ?

I am afraid the compliment to his poetry will not repay him for the injury to his character.



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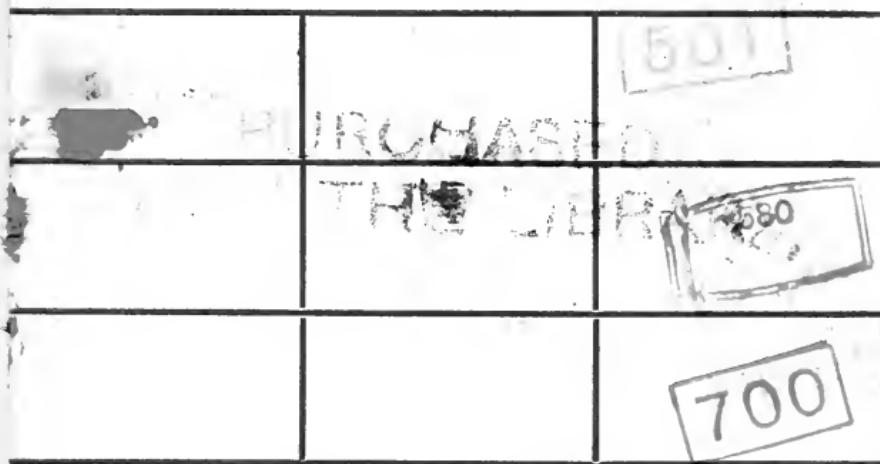
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